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NAME OF AUTHOR/*NOM DE L'AUTEUR* HARINDAR AULACH

TITLE OF THESIS/*TITRE DE LA THÈSE* POLITICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC PERSPECTIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING: BRITAIN AND THE SUDETEN ISSUE, 1938

UNIVERSITY/*UNIVERSITÉ* UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/ *GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE* DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/*ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE GRADE* 1977

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POLITICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC PERSPECTIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING : BRITAIN AND THE SUDETEN ISSUE, 1938

by

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A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
FALL, 1977

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled .... POLITICAL AND BUREAUCRATIC PERSPECTIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING: BRITAIN AND THE SUDETEN ISSUE, 1938

submitted by HARINDAR AULACH

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DATE 7 October, 1977

DEDICATED

TO

TANIA

for living through it

AND

MUM and DAD

for their support from afar

ABSTRACT

This is a study not so much of the question "Why Munich?" as of the policy antecedents of Munich. It is therefore a study of the responses of the British decision-making elite, both at the political and at the bureaucratic level, to the challenge posed by the European situation during the period March-September, 1938.

A fundamental difference is discernible in the pattern of responses emanating from both levels. Using a modified version of the classification provided by Rosenau, one finds that though the Foreign Office was continuously motivated by what is described as the 'promotive' spirit, the responses at the political level tended to vary at each stage. In Phase I, it was predominantly 'preservative'; in Phase II, predominantly 'promotive'; in Phase III, quite 'preservative'; and in Phase IV, unambiguously 'acquiescent'.

It is presumed that the risk-taking propensities of the two elites differed, that whereas the political elite was susceptible to greater fluctuations in this respect, the bureaucratic elite held a steady, moderate course. The differing risk-taking propensities of the two elites are presumed to have been rooted in their differing sensitivities to crucial variables. Whereas the political elite are believed to have been more sensitive to considerations of military strength, political stability,

public opinion and environmental hostility, the bureaucratic elite is believed to have been more governed by factors of issue salience and respect for international structure. The study is essentially explorative in character and seeks more to establish the parameters of, rather than enunciate a theory of, policy-making at the elite level.

The variance between the two levels, supplemented by the absence of any meaningful interaction between them, greatly reduced the chances of any effective intervention by Britain in the European system of the period. In stating this, one does not presume that the political elite abandoned any of its authority or that the bureaucratic elite challenged it. Rather, while admitting that in fundamental decisions, the political elite prevailed, one has to note that the contrary directions in which the two levels moved had its inevitable impact on the actual input into the international system. In the face of the irresoluteness, indecisiveness and paucity of positive action that Britain thus displayed, Munich perhaps was inevitable.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like Abou Ben Adhem, the name of my supervisor, Wally Cummins, must head the list of people I am indebted to. He proffered both crucial suggestions and morale-boosting encouragement at critical times. But for his steady faith in my endeavour, I might have never got around to the Mikado on 7 October, 1977. Larry Pratt's extensive knowledge of the period under study kept the historical errors to a minimum; and Gurston Dacks's steady pursuit of clarity in my analytical framework was a major factor in its taking its present shape. Ulrich Trumpener's keen interest in my research backed by an eminently laudable passion for historical accuracy kept me constantly on my toes. Michael Sullivan commented constructively on the theses. His recently-published text clarified my thinking on several points and and thus indirectly contributed to this study.

Grant Davy and Juris Lejnieks read parts of the thesis and made useful suggestions. Bobby McKown helped me in more ways than one. Monika Porritt, Myrna Garanis, Sharon Hobson and Gerard Grobben put up with what, at times, were surely inconvenient requests.

Bhagwan Dua, ever a good friend, gave me both his unstinted support and invaluable advice. Frank Dimitrov's lakeside cottage provide a welcome respite from the rigours of this research. The proof-reading efforts of Mohan Pinisetti and my brother, Surindar, helped me meet the constantly pressing deadline. To all of them, my thanks. Though my parents were not physically present during the writing of this thesis, I owe them much for their spiritual support.

A fellow graduate student once told me that but for the bitching of his wife, his thesis would never have been finished. This does not apply to Tania. Not only did she show a marvellous patience while I chewed the tops of countless pencils, she took an active interest in the work itself and in fact, assisted immeasurably in feeding it, when completed, into the computer. I don't know, however, what she did with all those pencils.

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CHAPTER I

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The extant literature on appeasement, in asking the question "Why Munich ?" has overwhelmingly tended to delve into its motivational aspects. [1] The dynamics of the process behind the evolution of British policy in the period between the Anschluss and the Munich Pact - expressed in the question "How Munich ?" - have been largely ignored. This thesis concerns itself with one aspect of this question viz. the differing perceptions of the issue held by the bureaucratic and political elites of Britain and the translation of these perceptions into policy-relevant outputs. In other words, it focuses on the ongoing reponses of these policy-making levels to the continuing though ambiguous challenge of the international environment during the period March-September, 1938. The analytical framework presented here will not only ensure that data relevant to the Czech-Sudeten crisis is organized and presented in a systematic manner, but will simultaneously serve the purpose of investigating the general political-bureaucratic responses to environmental stimuli.

The need for systematic research in the latter area was highlighted by Karl Deutsch and Dieter Senghaas in a seminal article in The Sage International Yearbook of Foreign Policy Studies: 1973[2] In that article, they pointed out

---

[1] For a succinct survey see Dwight E. Lee (ed.) Munich: Blunder, Plot or Tragic Necessity (Lexington: D.C.Heath, 1970).

> In contrast to the obvious importance of the governmental machinery and personnel for the performance of nations, there is a striking lack of careful study of its effect on the incidence of war and peace.

The only studies that could claim to be systematic investigations of this relationship were those done by Snyder and Paige (1958),[3] Paige (1968),[4] and Allison (1968).[5] The first-mentioned study was the first, albeit partial, application to a concrete international phenomenon - the American intervention in Korea - of the well-known Snyder, Bruck and Sapin decision-making framework (1953). The second was an extended application to the same subject of a framework greatly modified to meet empirical demands. A notable contribution of the study was a series of hypotheses set down, for heuristic purposes, at its conclusion. The last study, that of Allison was a rather interesting application of alternative models to the analysis of one phenomenon, the Cuban Missile crisis, even though, as Sullivan has pointed out, the different models applied to different decisions.[6] In a broad criticism of available decision-making models, Sullivan goes on to say they "fail to show clear relationships between specified variables in the decision process."[7]

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[2] Karl Deutsch and Dieter Senghaas, "The Steps to War: A Survey of System Levels, Decision Stages and Research Results," Sage International Yearbook of Foreign Policy Studies I ed. Patrick J. McGowan (Beverley Hills: Sage, 1973), p. 308.

[3] R. Snyder and G. Paige, "The United States decision to aggression in Korea: the application of an analytical scheme, "Administrative Science Quarterly," 3(1958), pp. 341-78.

[4] G. Paige, The Korean Decision (New York: Free Press, 1968).

[5] Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971).

The paucity of systematic research in the area has led Deutsch and Senghaas to point out two specific research gaps:

> 1) The effects of the larger regional or international environment on...government organization and bureaucracy and
> 2) The effects of intra-psychic processes on the government organization and bureaucracy in regards to matters of war and peace, including particularly the choice of a national strategy.[8]

The analytical framework presented here will be a partial attempt to bridge these gaps. Further, by incorporating specified effects of the domestic environment on governmental machinery, it will seek to add to the literature on policy-making.

As mentioned earlier, this dissertation analyzes those actions of the British decision-makers that touched upon the Sudeten Issue during the crucial period March-September, 1938. The decision-makers we have in mind were the members of the British Cabinet (the political elite) and the members of the Foreign Office (the bureaucratic elite). There is reason to believe that these two decision-making levels neither evaluated inputs from the domestic and international environments in the same manner nor weighed the various factors affecting policy choices in the same way. In fact, their basic policy choices appear to have been different and the contrary directions in which they moved in part explain the irresoluteness, indecisiveness and lack of bold initiative that Britain displayed with reference to the Sudeten Issue during the period.

---

[6] Michael P. Sullivan, International Relations: Theories and Evidence (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 73.
[7] Ibid., p. 81.
[8] Deutsch and Senghaas, op. cit., p. 131.

Using certain categories to designate policy outcomes, the dissertation traces the impact of domestic and international factors as they influenced policy. In doing so, a major goal is to explain why the two decision-making levels reacted differently to what in many cases were the same stimuli.

THE TWO LEVELS OF DECISION-MAKING

Before setting out our hypotheses, some preliminary comments on the two levels are in order. "Most students of public administration," states William Boyer," have discarded the old notion that administration in a government setting is distinct and separate from policy-making." * Not only are the two treated in modern literature as

---

* William W. Boyer, Bureaucracy on Trial: Policy-making by Government Agencies (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964) p. 167.

inseparable, at times it is difficult to distinguish between them. "We have," continues Boyer, "reached a point in the evolution of bureaucracy when administration must be defined explicitly in terms of its importance for policy making."[10] Referring specifically to foreign policy, Francis Rourke has explained this point as follows, "As new executive organizations have been created and old organizations expanded to handle foreign problems, career officials have acquired expanding influence in making and carrying out decisions."[11]

In short, though the distinction between the political and the bureaucratic elite is still a valid one, many analysts claim it is difficult to maintain the distinction solely in terms of the former thinking out policy and the latter faithfully administering it. In fact, the policy-making role of the bureaucrat has been so emphasized by some that it has given rise to terms like "bureaucratic determinism."[12] These analysts claim that it is actually the bureaucratic, not the political elite, that formulates policy, leaving the latter little leeway in the matter. Even if this argument is regarded as extreme - Rourke, for one, certainly looks at it as being extreme - the fact does remain that the bureaucratic elite can narrow the range of options open to a political leader, as Allison suggests;[13] or influence, if not shape, the factual premises on which the political elite base their judgements on policy issues, as Simon has observed.[14] At the very least, the former controls the capabilities through which policy is translated into action and, as Rourke has pointed out, "bureaucratic resistance or incapacity may spell the doom of even the most modest policy proposals."[15] Some observers have held that bureaucratic resistance can only lessen its policy-making influence with the political elite. According to them, a bureaucrat is better off if he either offers advice in matters he knows his political chief has no strong views on or offers only congenial advice in matters that he has. As opposed to this, Rourke has written,

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[10] Ibid., p. 68.

[11] Francis E. Rourke, Bureaucracy and Foreign Policy (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 8.

[12] Ibid., p. 16.

> If there are cases in which bureaucrats appear only to be telling political officials what they want to hear, there are equally striking illustrations of situations in which staff members of executive agencies have substantially re-shaped the views of political leaders.[16]

Be that as it may, for our purposes what is important is that

> policy orientations reflect not only the intentions of the decision-makers, but also the characteristics of the organizations through which they are carried into practice. While elected officials may have grand designs in international politics, it is the determination and skill of the

---

[13] Allison, op. cit., pp. 67-100.
[14] H. Simon, Administrative Behavior (2nd ed. New York: MacMillan, 1957).
[15] Rourke, op. cit., p. 48.
[16] Ibid., p. 23.

> bureaucratic apparatus which frequently determines whether these objectives will be realized.[17]

An essential difference exists in terms of the perspective from which each level looks at and analyses a particular international situation. Generally speaking, the perspective of the political elite is broad and heuristic, while that of the bureaucratic elite is narrow and rational. The identification of heuristic behavior with the political elite and of rational behavior with the bureaucratic elite is a notable contribution made to the literature by William Gore. The following deserves to be quoted:

> Much rational behavior tends to be habituated and well integrated. Heuristic behavior is marked by improvisation, spontaneity and accommodation. These surface differences seem to penetrate to basic functions: rational activities often reinforce the *status quo* and remain relatively stable and ideologically conservative, heuristic processes tend to press the *status quo* and imply change and ideological liberality."[18]

Gore highlights the ideological differences behind the differing elite perspectives. If one accepts Geertz's terse definition of ideology as "a schematic image of social order,"[19] one would imagine that the "schematic images" of the two elites, the ideational backgrounds that govern their respective approaches to a common problem, are different. Whereas bureaucratic ideology is isolated from the public glare and less affected by external pressures, political ideology touches a large number of people and must be responsive to their needs. By referring to Harry Johnson's four-fold classification of ideology [20] we are able to state that whereas the 'schematic image' of the bureaucratic elite is largely conservative, the 'schematic image' of the political elite is reformist. Whereas, the bureaucratic elite is resistant to innovations, the political elite is, relatively speaking, open to entry and inclusion of elements from other outlooks. The bureaucratic elite is peculiarly sensitive to what Morton Kroll calls the "unique, distinctive time dimension" of a policy. "The obvious analytical peg of the dimension of time," he writes," is the relation of the present to the past. The time dimension inevitably reveals the degree of historical commitment within a policy." [21] Thompson's characterization of organization ideology as "a cognitive system that rationalizes (read 'legitimises') its past actions and influences its present and future ones" [22] fits in with Kroll's view. The political elite however, is not tied down so much by a sense of historical commitment. While it will not ignore historical fact, it is more concerned with the current situation and will not let 'historical commitment' get in the way of solving or escaping from the pressing problems of the present. Of course, this leads to a fair amount of improvisation and what one might call 'impromptu decision-making'. Further, while the members of the bureaucratic elite are conservative ideologues in integrating their thinking around one pre-eminent value, viz. historical commitment, the political elite's partiality for 'reform' ideology makes for a certain "unevenness of pressure" in translating ideas into practice. In other words, it induces the political elite to play by ear.

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[17] Ibid., p. 48.

[18] William Gore, *Administrative Decision-making*, (New York: Wiley, 1964).

[19] C. Geertz, "A Schematic Image of Social Order," in *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David E. Apter. (New York: Free Press, 1964).

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[20] Harry M. Johnson, "Ideology and the Social System," in Ideology and Discontent, op. cit. The other Johnson categories are Revolutionary Ideology and Counter-Ideology.

[21] Morton Kroll, Policy ann Administration," in Politicies, Decisions and Organization, eds. F.J. Lyden, G.A. Shipman and M. Kroll (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1969), p. 7.

[22] Victor A. Thompson, Bureaucracy and Innovation (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1969), p. 3.

Thus one can say that a professional organization, as is the British Foreign Office, tends to be more procedure-oriented and less inclined to adapt itself to environmental changes, while a non-professional organization, such as the British Cabinet, is less procedure-oriented but more susceptible to environmental fluctuations. James Thompson has referred to this tendency of the bureaucratic elite as evidence of a 'curator mentality,' making "the preservation of past policy the primary responsibility of the bureaucrat rather than the initiation of new ideas." [23] Morton Halperin and Tang Tsou express a similar sentiment :

> To make the bureaucracy change its position is much more difficult than allowing it to continue a given policy; the bureaucracy prefers the known

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[23] Thompson, op. cit., p. 3.

> dangers of an existing course to the uncertain costs and gains of change.[24]

With the two perspectives differing as they do, it may be expected that there exists some conflict and hostility between the two elites, with an underlying current of non-cooperation marking their mutual relationship.[25] Unfortunately empirical research on the dimension is sparse. A notable exception is the research done by Robert Spadaro.[26]

Studying the mutual perceptions of politicians and administrators in three American states with "contrasting political climates and styles,"[27] Spadaro found that each elite had a low opinion of the other and believed that it did not enjoy sufficient understanding or trust from the other. Each felt that the other did not sufficiently appreciate its view point or prove sufficiently receptive to incoming advice. The political elite, moreover, saw the bureaucratic elite as too hide-bound by procedure, unable to adapt itself quickly to the changing dynamics of some situation and incapable of responding adequately to public pressures. It did not give much importance to the supposed expertise of the bureaucratic elite, believing it to be "neither better trained nor capable of better running government than politicians."[28] The bureaucratic elite, though viewing its political counterpart somewhat less negatively, still did not think highly of the latter's ability or efficiency. Interestingly enough , however, it did not regard the political elite as overly rigid. Rather, the latter was regarded as rather partial to certain groups and not a stickler for justice and equity. Though both groups believed that there should be active cooperation between the two, the frequency of actual contact was less than desirable. Spadaro summarized his results as follows:

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[24] Morton Halperin and Tang Tsou, United States Policy Towards the Off-Shore Islands (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 137.

[25] See, for example, Rufus E. Miles, Jr., "Administrative Adaptability to Political change," Public Administration Review, September, 1965, pp. 221-5.

[26] Robert N. Spadaro, "Role Perceptions of Politicians vis-a-vis Public Administrators : Parameters for Public Policy," Western Political Quarterly, December, 1973, pp. 717-727.

[27] Ibid., p. 718. The three states in question were Minnesota, Pennsylvania and South Carolina.

> There is a perceived difference in time referents for policy goals, a basic lack of trust and understanding by each in the other and a self-interest evident in who really represents the public best, which would suggest important constraints for the policy process. Politicians also seemed more willing to bend rules and regulations in accommodating contituency and clientele interests than do administrators, which could also lead to policy conflict. There remains considerable basis for less than full cooperation, interaction and confidence in terms of maximising policy planning and processes.[29]

SCHEME OF ANALYSIS

While keeping sight of the two levels of policy-making, one must remember also that they operate in a particular international and domestic context. The two environments not only generate the stimuli to act, but act as assets and liabilities for the decision-makers, enhancing or restricting the latitude they perceive themselves to have in a decision-making situation. In our scheme of analysis therefore, changes in the perceived environment are treated as independent variables and policy orientations as dependent variables. The risk-taking propensity of each elite is taken to be the intervening variable. Thus

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[28] Ibid., p. 321.
[29] Ibid.

TABLE 1

Independent Variables	Intervening Variables	Dependent Variables
1. Domestic Environment 2. International Environment	Elite Risk-taking Propensities	Policy Orientations

We have commented generally on the decision-making levels. We shall now make a few general comments on the independent variables, suggesting heuristically the effects they have on decision-makers in general and the two levels in particular. Their combined effect on policy orientations will follow.

In the choice of variables to be regarded as independent, a frequent problem encountered is the extent to which these variables are discrete and independent in reality. An independent variable "A" might have an effect on an independent variable "B" and vice-versa. This interaction effect may thus confuse the effect that these variables are independently hypothesized to have on the dependent variable "C." Thus the hypothesized relationship

```
                    Variable C
                    |        |
                    |        |
                    |        |
      Variable A >----'        '----< Variable B
```

may give way in actuality to the following

```
                    Variable C
                    |        |
                    |        |
                    |        |
      Variable A >---- -->  <-- ----< Variable B
```

This is a problem arising out of the fluid and complex nature of the many political phenomena studied. Nevertheless, even if independent variables are not statistically discrete, broad differences between them can easily be identified by the perceptive analyst, making their use justifiable.

DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT

The domestic variables employed in this framework are :

(1) Military Strength (MS)

(2) Political Stability (PS)

(3) Public Opinion (PO)

MILITARY STRENGTH

Military force, says Kenneth Waltz, "has..served not only as the ultima ratio of international politics, but indeed as the first and constant one." [30] Military Strength is amongst the most important of resources that a state can possess and is indicative of its potential capability to influence the international environment. The theorists who focus on 'power' as a major determinant of international relations are especially partial to this point of view. In propositional form, this view has been stated by Keen and McGowan as follows:

> The greater the national society's resources, the greater its potential impact upon external events and the greater the range of events it may affect. Conversely, limited resources produce weak states that do not have much potential to affect external events. [31]

Thus a situation, if perceived to be militarily advantageous will, other things being equal, encourage decision-makers to adopt a more forward policy; perceived military weakness will be regarded as a liability, making them vacillate in situations involving risks.[32] We hypothesize that this tendency would be greater with the political than with the bureaucratic elite. In other words, we hypothesize that the effect of military strength as a variable will tend to be greater on the former than on the latter. We hope to show in the present study that Britain's political elite responded much more to considerations of relative military strength than did the bureaucratic elite.

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[30] Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Structure, National Force and the Balance of World Power," Journal of International Affairs, XXI (1967), p. 216.

[31] James G. Kean and Patrick J. McGowan, National Attributes and Foreign Policy Participation: A Path Analysis," Sage Yearbook I, p. 226.

POLITICAL STABILITY

Michael Sullivan has stated that political stability, more than any other attribute, has been regarded as crucial in foreign policy behavior. In his words, the common hypothesis has been that "the greater the domestic unrest, the greater the external conflict, for leaders in trouble internally try to take care of their problems by focusing public attention on an external enemy."[33] Conflictual behavior involves risk. Domestic unrest is therefore assumed to move the decision-making elite towards higher risk-taking. By the same token, societies which are characterized by an absence of domestic unrest will stay away from conflictual behavior and will be more cautious in their foreign policy. As Sullivan has pointed out, the domestic unrest - external conflict hypthesis is central to Coser's work and has formed the basis of studies done by analysts as varied as Waltz,[34] Wright,[35] Whiting and Ernst Haas.[36] Lasswell, however, was the first notable theorist to link domestic instability with aggressive foreign behavior.[37] In 1968, M. Haas published a paper in which he gave empirical support to the hypothesis.[38] Recently, Jonathan Wilkenfeld, working on the Middle East, stated internal unrest in a country contributed towards an aggressive stance towards other nations.[39] John Collins, working on Africa, found high correlations between several domestic and foreign dimensions.[40] It is quite possible that other variables may intervene in the political instability - external conflict relationship, but the essential connection between the two cannot be ignored. This linkage has been expressed thus by Deutsch and Senghaas.

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[32] For an empirical basis for this assertion, see Maurice A. East and Charles F. Hermann, "Do Nation-Types Accout for Foreign Policy Behavior?" in Comparing Foreign Policies: Theories, Findings and Methods (New York, Wiley, 1974)). Michael Sullivan has stated that "Large, developed systems are likely to be more active in foreign affairs, and because they have more actions and more international interests, they be involved in more conflicts as well as more alliances. They are also - because of their military capabilities - likely to be more militaristic in their foreign policy." Michael Sullivan, op. cit., p. 105.

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[33] Sullivan, op. cit., p. 122.

[34] Kenneth Waltz, Man, the State, and War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 16.

[35] Quincy Wright, A Study of War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

[36] Allen S. Whiting and Ernest B. Haas, Dynamics of International Relations (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956).

[37] H.D. Lasswell, World Politics and Personal Insecurity (New York: Free Press, 1965).

[38] M. Haas, "Social Change and National Aggressiveness, 900-1960," Quantitative International Politics, ed. J.D. Singer (New York: Free Press, 1968), pp. 135-54.

[39] Jonathan Wilkenfeld et al., "Conflict Interactions in the Middle East, 1949-1967, Journal of Conflict Resolution 16 (June, 1972), pp. 135-54.

> "Societies which fail to provide security of income and status for large parts of their populations are likely to give rise to extremist political movements, and their rulers may then have to choose between letting the increased aggressive attitudes of these groups explode in domestic strife, or assuage them by rapid and far-reaching reforms, or channel them into international conflict....[41]

Since domestic instability is more apt to threaten the position of the political elite than that of the bureaucratic elite, we hypothesize that this factor will tend to weigh more with the former than the latter in deciding a response towards the international system.

PUBLIC OPINION

Whether the public determines foreign policy, as Walter Lippmann has argued, or whether it responds to government action, as certain other theorists have held, is indeed a vexing question.[42] As Abravanel and Hughes have stated, "the nature of the relationship between public sentiment and foreign policy is still an unresolved issue." What they, for example, have found is that the relationship varies from country to country, that it is relatively high in Britain and that it becomes stronger when foreign policy involves certain countries more than others. [43] Probably the most acceptable statement on the subject is that of Milton Rosenberg when he states that though the elite can prepare the public for certain policy alternatives and generally shape public opinion on international questions,

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[40] John Collins, "Foreign Conflict Behavior and Domestic Disorder in Africa," in Conflict Behavior and Linkage Politics, ed. Jonathan Wilkenfeld (New York: David Mckay, 1973).

[41] Deutsch and Senghaas, op. cit., p. 306.

[42] W. Lippmann, The Public Philosophy, (New York: Mentor Books, 1956), p. 24.

> "elitist perceptions of the opinions of publics (whether these be specialized and articulate pressure groups or the "mass public" itself) tend to have some effect upon policy processes, and particularly at times they do constrain and limit the shaping and execution of policy innovations." [44]

Following Rosenberg, we may say that a supportive public opinion adds to the assets of the decision-makers while a non-supportive public opinion adds to their liabilities. In the earlier stages of a dispute of course, as Deutsch and Senghaas have commented, public opinion may be largely disinterested. The issue of the German minority in Czechoslovakia, for example, largely remained a "non-issue" in the eyes of the British public until environmental pressures made it impossible to ignore it. But the 'mood' of

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[43] Martin Abravanel and Barry Hughes, "The Relationship between Public Opinion and Governmental Foreign Policy: A Cross-National Study," Sage Yearbook, op. cit., p. 108.

[44] Milton Rosenberg, "Images in Relation to the Policy Process: American Public Opinion on Cold-War Issues," International Behavior, ed. H.C. Kelman (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1965), P. 285.

Britain remained essentially non-belligerent and this was reflected in official policy. A pacific public opinion discourages risk-taking, an aggressive one encourages it.

As for the relative effect of public opinion on the two levels of decision-making, Rourke has commented that "a traditional failing of bureaucratic decision-making is that it fails to reflect or anticipate public opinion."[45] In the present study, we hope to show that public opinion as a factor in policy-making had greater weight with Britain's political elite than with its bureaucratic elite.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The international variables considered are

(1) Respect for Structure

(2) Environmental Hostility

(3) Issue Salience

RESPECT FOR STRUCTURE

A foreign policy response is made in the context of a particular international structure.

As Waltz has defined it, international structure is "the pattern according to which power is distributed."[46]

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[45] Rourke, op. cit., p. 70.

[46] Waltz, "International Structure, National Force and the Balance of World Power," Journal of International Affairs XXI (1967).

Broadly speaking, the structure may be bipolar or multipolar. According to Oran Young, the bipolar model emphasizes

> the importance of a single, dominant axis of conflict and the tendency for regional actors and issues to be conceptualized in relationship to the underlying bipolar axis of the system. [47]

The multipolar model, on the other hand, stresses "the existence of a multiplicity of axes of conflict and the phenomenon of cross-cutting relationships among the axes." [48] A multipolar system has a greater possiblity of what Deutsch and Singer call "interactional opportunities" [49] and should logically afford a greater flexibility in policy choices.

There is, however, one important constraint. The ease with which alliances can be shifted influences an actor not to subject them to too much stress. A multipolar system what Waltz has called "balance of power politics." As he puts it,

> In a world of three or more powers the possiblity of making and breaking alliances exists. The substance of balance - of - power politics is found in the diplomacy by which alliances are made, maintained, or disrupted. [50]

Bipolarity, he observes, leads to "a shift in conceptual perspective." Balance of power is retained not through external realignments, but through the medium of rearmament.[51] If a greater rigidiy marks international relations in a bipolar world, it increases the scope for the exercise of power. Waltz claims that

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[47] Oran Young, Political Discontinuities in the International System," World Politics, XX (1968), p. 272.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Karl Deutsch and J. David Singer, Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability," World Politics, XVI (1964), p. 394.
[50] Waltz, op. cit., p. 219.

> Recalcitrant allies may be treated with indifference; they may be effectively disciplined. Pressure can be applied to moderate the behavior of third states or to check and contain their activities.[52]

Whatever the case, the respect-for-structure variable implies that, to a lesser or greater extent, the existing structure will be deemed worthy of maintenance. If a multipolar system exists, respect for structure will result in efforts to practice "balance of power politics." The more pronounced this respect, the more energetic will these efforts be. If a bipolar system is the order of the day, respect for structure will imply a greater play of what may be simply called "power politics." It is hypothesized that the bureaucratic elite will have a greater inherent respect for international structure and will be more concerned about maintaining it. Therefore, the bureaucratic elite is believed to be more sensitive to structural considerations and nuances of the external environment than is the political elite.

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[51] Ibid., p. 221.
[52] Ibid., p. 230.

ENVIRONMENTAL HOSTILITY

If systemic stability is defined narrowly as the perpetuation of a particular distribution of power, a constant tension may be said to exist between change and stability in the system. An inequitable distribution of power "violates one's sense of justice and leads to national resentments that are in many ways troublesome." [53] It will create desire for change amongst the disadvantaged and a potential resistance to it from the advantaged. Whether the bipolar or the multipolar model is more conducive to expansionist tendencies is difficult to establish. Deutsch and Singer attack the bipolar model [54] and Waltz thinks the multipolar model is the greater destabilising force. [55] Be that as it may, if an actor is dissatisfied with a particular distribution of force and with the existing allocation of systemic values, he will most certainly work towards their change. Resistance is bound to come from those nations who regard these attempts as a threat to their interests. Nations who are amenable to this redistribution taking place within certain limits will regard the revisionist power somewhat more ambiguously. The bureaucratic elite will tend to view this desire for change with suspicion, the political elite with greater equanimity. As such, it is speculated that the former will press for some control over the direction and rate of change, the latter will delay action until change takes on a distinctly hostile aspect. At this point environmental hostility will tend to exercise a greater impact on the political elite than it will on the bureaucratic elite. Putting it differently, the former will have a greater propensity to respond to 'threat' cues in the environment whereas the latter will tend to be more sensitive to the 'change' cues.

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[53] Ibid., p. 227.
[54] Deutsch and Singer, op. cit., pp. 390-406.
[55] Waltz, op. cit., pp. 217-231.

ISSUE SALIENCE

Closely allied to, but distinct from both environmental hostility and respect for structure is the factor of issue salience. As defined by Coplin, Mills and O'Leary, the concept denotes "the importance of an issue to each actor."[56] An issue[57] can become salient for reasons other than an increase in environmental threat. The political leadership might change, a disputed territory may suddenly acquire greater value, a country's reputation become unwittingly involved and so on. Salience may thus be introduced without any overt threat to essential interests by one of the parties to the issue. At the same time, it goes without saying that any overt issue-relevant threat is bound to increase an issue's relevance.

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[56] William D. Coplin, Stephen L. Mills and Michael K. O'Leary, "The PRINCE concepts and the Study of Foreign Policy," Sage Yearbook I, p. 78.

[57] By issue, we mean "any conflict over values or interests among identifiable individuals or groups." cf. James Rosenau, The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy, (New York: Free Press, 1971).

Coplin, Mills and O'Leary have stated that "the focus on issues as proposed allocations of values and the issue positions of relevant actors has received little careful attention in the foreign policy literature."[58] If it is accepted that in our interdependent world, no issue can be wholly international or wholly domestic,[59] it follows that actors can see an issue either in its international or domestic context. For example, intellectual dissension in Russia was seen by post-War American Administrations as essentially a domestic issue until the Carter administration saw fit to emphasize its international aspects. Apartheid in South Africa can be seen purely in a domestic context as a struggle for power between a black majority and a white minority. In its international context, it may be seen as a negation of the fundamental human right of equality and cause South Africa to be ostracized by other nations. South Africa will, of course, insist that her population is her own business and that she has every right to handle it the way she wants to. Russia, for her part, will argue that the dissenters are reactionaries taking aim at her political stability and that it is her prerogative to deal with them in any way she sees fit. In fact, an appeal to the domestic arena is the automatic choice of any nation that does not want foreign interference.

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[58] Ibid., p. 84.
[59] Rosenau has written, "...it is virtually a truism tha nations are becoming increasingly interdependent and that the internal life of no nation is entirely free from the intrusion of external factors." Rosenau, op. cit. p. 405.

For our purposes, it is important to note Wildavsky's remark that

> the context in which the issue occurs not only helps determine the decision-maker's perception of the facts and values but also the way in which he seeks out, receives, and evaluates this information. [60]

It is hypothesized that the bureaucratic elite, with its greater sensitivity to the international environment, is more apt to see an issue in its international context. The political elite, it is felt will see the issue in its domestic context. This is only a relative statement and does not imply that the latter will completely ignore the international aspect or the former, the domestic context.

RISK-TAKING AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE

The propensity to take risks is a variable that has never been subjected to systematic study. Our comments here are merely of a suggestive nature. "Risk," states Gawthorp

> refers to (1) the probability that the decision alternatiive ultimately selected may not achieve the desired results and (2) the probability that severe deprivations - psychological and/or

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[60] Aaron Wildavsky, The Revolt Against the Masses : Essays on Politics and Public Policy, (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p. 139.

material - will be incurred by the individual.[61]

In other words, what risk involves is not only the probability of negative pay-offs resulting but the probability that the negative pay-offs themselves will be high. There is, however, an important element which must be taken into account, i.e., the nature of the positive pay-offs. By doing this, we are able to arrive at a definition of the intervening variable in our framework, i.e., risk-taking propensity.

For analytical convenience, we shall take a hypothetical situation. Imagine a boat coming loose from its moorings and drifting to the middle of the lake. The owner, on shore, is faced with the prospect of recovering the boat. He takes into account various situational parameters and then arrives at a decision. Let us portray the problem thus:

Overall Situation : Boat Adrift on Lake
Owner on Shore

|retrieval of boat = swim| (1)
Goal | |Alternative
|retention of life = stay| (2)

Situation 1

information parameter = wind low; water smooth
highest positive pay-off = boat
highest negative pay-off = drowning
probability of negative pay-off = low
probable choice : Alternative (1)

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[61] C. Gawthorp, *Bureaucratic Behavior in the Executive Branch: An Analysis of Organizational Change* (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 95.

Situation 2

information parameter = wind high; water rough
highest positive pay-off = boat
highest negative pay-off = drowning
probability of negative pay-off = high
probable choice : Alternative (2)

Situation 3

information parameter = wind low; water smooth
= baby in boat
highest positive pay-off= boat+baby
highest negative pay-off= drowning
probability of negative pay-off = low
near-certain choice : Alternative (1)

Situation 4

information parameter = wind high; water smooth
=baby in boat
highest positive pay-off = boat+baby
highest negative pay-off = drowning
probability of negative pay-off = high
probable choice : ?

The propensity to take risk i.e. accepting the probability of negative pay-offs is high in situations 1 and 3 (where risk is low) and it is low in situation 2 (where risk is high). In situation 4, the probability of high negative pay-offs is high but the rejection of the risk is confounded by the presence of extremely high pay-offs.

Risk-taking propensity is thus seen to be directly proportional to the positive pay-offs involved and inversely proportional to the probability of negative pay-offs. In short, risk-taking propensity, at any particular moment, is proportional to the attractiveness of the contemplated alternative, whatever that alternative might be.

$$RTP = \frac{PPOV}{NPOV} \times \frac{1}{PNPO}$$

where RTP = Risk-taking Propensity
PPOV= Positive Pay-off Value
NPOV= Negative Pay-off Value
PNPO= Probability of Negative Pay-offs

It should be mentioned that risk-taking propensity, thus defined, does not refer to a personality trait (behavioral tendency) existing independently of the risks in a given situation. It is rather very much dependent on the assessment of the negative pay-off probability. Thus when we say risk-taking propensity is low, we do not mean that the decision-maker is inherently a low risk-taker. We mean, rather that the decision-maker (1) perceives the negative pay-off to be high, (2) assesses the probability of negative pay-offs to be high as well and consequently (3) is unwilling to take the risk, i.e., adopt the said alternative. Rather than speaking of one decision-maker as inherently cautious and another inherently adventurous, we would rather think of them as possessing personality traits that make them place a higher or lower value on a situational risk. A decision-maker may be dominated by a high need to achieve or he may not, he may be pessimistic and thus more susceptible to the negative aspects of incoming information, or, he may be close-minded and thus be nearly immune to the information flow. [62] Systematic work on this question still remains to be done. What is important to remember here is that the assessment of the negative pay-off probability has an effect on, rather than is an effect of, the risk-taking propensity, in terms of our formula. Risk-taking propensity is a subjective situational variable, not a personality parameter.

Further, the emphasis in risk-taking is as much on 'risk' as on 'taking', i.e., both the perceptual and behavioral aspects are given an equal emphasis. Of course, the behavior is relative to the level of perceived risk, presuming the positive pay-off value to be constant.

Used as the intervening variable in our framework, risk-taking will tend to be high when of the domestic variables, Military Strength (MS) is perceived to be high, Political Stability (PS) to be low, Public Opinion (PO) to be aggressive and of the international variables, International Structure (IS) is deemed as important and Issue Salience (IS) felt to be high. For risk-taking to tend towards the low end of the scale, the variables would have to have reverse values.

Because of the stable, rational style of the bureaucratic elite, we suggest that it will as a rule favour only moderate risks. The need for high achievement and the fear of failure is less for it than for the political elite because of the assured nature of its office. These factors combine with the heuristic style of the political elite to make it favour either high or low risks or cause greater fluctuations in their risk-taking propensities.

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[62] Joseph de Rivera, The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policyl (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1968), p. 173.

POLICY ORIENTATIONS

Heretofore, we have attempted to discuss how the differing perspectives of the two policy making levels tend to make them susceptible to different types of variables. We have also speculated on the possible effects of the latter on the risk-taking propensities of the decision-makers. This exercise, though unavoidably lengthy, is a necessary prelude to explaining the variations in policy orientations, not only during the period in question, but also between the two policy-making levels.

By 'policy orientation', we mean something very similar to what K.J. Holsti means by the term 'national role conception'. For him the latter means

> orientations toward the external environment and commitments to certain tasks or functions within various sets of international relationships. [63]

Holsti, however, ascribes to the concept a broader meaning than we do. For him, the orientation in question governs the behaviour of a state on "in the international system or in subordinate regional systems ...on a continuing basis."[64] For us, however, the thrust of a decision-maker's orientation is rather directed towards a particular issue, though no doubt, it takes place in a certain international context.[65]

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[63] K.J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy," International Studies Quarterly, IV (September 1970), p. 307

A suitable framework for encompassing policy variations is the four-fold classification of policy types suggested by James Rosenau.[66] Based on decision-makers' responses to significant environmental stimuli, the four categories he brings to our attention are : *preservative*, *promotive*, *intransigent* and *acquiescent*. There is a need, however, to re-define these categories somewhat to give them a greater consistency and empirical relevance than does Rosenau. For example, he has used the terms 'promotive' and 'preservative' in a somewhat unclear and contradictory manner.[67]

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[64] Ibid., p. 246.

[65] The focus of our work also differs. Whereas Holsti relates the total number of role concepts to the pattern of foreign activity, our emphasis is on the type of role a decision-maker envisages for his nation in a certain issue. Nevertheless, we agree with Holsti that "If we assume that most decisions will be reasonably consistent with role conceptions, then the task of foreign policy analysts should be to explain the origins, presence, and sources of change in national role conceptions rather than single decisions." Ibid., p. 306.

[66] James Roseanau, "Foreign Policy as Adaptive Behavior: Some Preliminary Notes for a Theoretical Model," *Comparative Politics*, II (1970).

We adopt four dimensions to help us differentiate the various categories. These dimensions are those of involvement, activity, military pressure and systemic goals.[68] Thus, as far as the Involvement Dimension is concerned, we find the degree of involvement to be high in the 'acquiescent' and 'intransigent' categories, moderate in the 'promotive' category and low in the 'preservative' category. We find a clear distinction between the *intransigent* (problem-exacerbating), *preservative* (problem-avoiding) and *promotive* (problem-solving) categories on the Activity Dimension. The *acquiescent* category is also 'problem-solving' but unlike the 'promotive' type, it is passive. The categories also divide themselves on the military dimension, two being coercive and two, essentially non-coercive. There is undoubtedly some overlapping on some dimensions. For example, the 'preservative' and 'acquiescent' categories are both passive and non-coercive. In order to keep the distinction between the two clear, we would have to refer not only to the Activity Dimension, but also to the Systemic Dimension i.e. for one ('acquiescent') survival is the main concern; for the other ('preservative'), stability is most important.

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[67] In one of his monographs, Rosenau paints 'promotive' as a basically inert policy and 'preservative' to imply a basically active one. Cf. James Rosenau, *The Adaptation of National Societies: A Theory of Political System Behavior and Transformation* (New York: McCaleb-Seeler, 1970)). In a subsequent article, however, the use of the terms is reversed. 'Promotive' now denotes "an attempt to create a new equilibrium" whereas 'preservative' means "acceptance of the existing equilibrium." James Rosenau, "Adaptive Politics in an Interdependent World," Orbis, XVI, I (1972), p. 164. It is the latter usage that has been incorporated in this analytical framework.

[68] The Involvement factor is especially stressed by Wendzel. He defines policy orientation towards a particular situation as "the degree and nature of involvement." As he puts it, "this orientation will vary with time and circumstance and because each state deals with many problems at once, it may have several different orientations simultaneously." cf. Robert L. Wendzel, *International Relations: A Policy-maker Focus* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1977), p. 56. In our framework, the Involvement Dimension refers strictly to the degree of involvement. The other dimensions, in different ways, refer to the nature of involvement.

Table 2 (overleaf) is relevant to our discussion :

Individual definitions for the categories may be presented as follows:

The Promotive policy orientation

(1) will be marked by a moderate to high degree of involvement in the matter at hand.
(2) will favour an activist and problem-solving role in shaping the environment
(3) favours 'innovative' types of strategies, with coercion as a possible weapon
(4) is prepared to accept a new order, if stability can be assured

Thus a 'promotive' policy-maker will respond to a stimulus from the environment with an innovative attitude and will set a limit to the price he is willing to pay to obtain something from the environment.

The Preservative policy orientation

(1) will be marked by a low degree of involvement in the situation concerned
(2) will be reluctant to assume an assertive role in shaping environment. It will tend to be problem-avoiding

TABLE 2

	PROMOTIVE	PRESERVATIVE	ACQUIESCENT	INTRANSIGENT
INVOLVEMENT Dimension	Moderate	Low	High	High
ACTIVITY Dimension	Problem-Solving Activist	Problem-Avoiding Passive	Problem-Solving Passive	Problem-Exacerbating Activist
MILITARY Dimension	Limited Coercive	Non-Coercive	Non-Coercive	Coercive
SYSTEMIC Dimension	Stability with new equilibrium	Stability with minimal changes	Survival	Expansion/ Resistance

(3) favours non-coercive, 'holding' types of strategies
(4) favours minimal changes in the existing order of things

Thus a 'preservative' policy-maker, on receiving an environmental stimulus, either a demand or offer, will tend to be dilatory and avoid any forthright communication with the international environment.[69]

The Acquiescent policy orientation

> (1) will be marked by a high though enforced degree of involvement in the situation
> (2) will admit powerlessness in shaping the environment
> (3) favours non-coercive, 'salvage' type of strategies
> (4) will reluctantly accept the new order, to ensure survival.

An 'acquiescent' policy-maker, when confronted with an environmental stimulus, be it a demand or an offer, will be inclined towards unconditionally accepting it. He, on his part, will tend to make offers in a somewhat fatalistic spirit.[70]

The Intransigent policy orientation

> (1) will be marked by a high degree of involvement in the matter at hand
> (2) will favour an activist but problem-exacerbating role in shaping the environment
> (3) is willing to risk war, if need be, to defend this position
> (4) will not respond to the 'change' cues in the environment or, if the source of 'change' cues,

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[69] According to Wendzel, "a rational choice of avoidance rests on the premise that non-involvement will not be harmful to one's security, (or at least less harmful than the projected consequences of involvement). This might be because the issues are perceived to be irrelevant or insignificant." Wendzel, op. cit. p. 57.

[70] In order to make the distinction between the 'preservative' and the 'acquiescent' categories clearer, it may be mentioned that whereas the former implies physical, if not psychological withdrawal, the latter does not; if the former has as an antecedent condition, a low level of tension, the latter's antecedent condition is marked by a peaking of tension.

will refuse alteration of an enunciated position An 'intransigent' policy-maker will reject the demands or offers of other nations, making it clear that cost is no bar in seeking fruition of these demands.

While presenting these categories, we acknowledge the fact that they are ideal types and not found in their pure form in real life. A particular orientation is only *primarily* so, not entirely so. When we talk of 'preservative', we are really implying *primarily* 'preservative'. When we refer to some behavior as 'promotive', we are really meaning it is *primarily* 'promotive'. This *caveat* holds good for the categories ''intransigent'' and 'acquiescent' as well. It is a *caveat* that should be kept in mind by the reader, not only while reading the definitions, but throughout the entire thesis.

THEORETICAL STRUCTURE

We will now gather in the various threads of our discussion with the sole purpose of explaining the variation in the dependent variable, i.e. the policy orientations.

It should be mentioned here that change in any one variable, variable "A", say, can itself lead to a change in policy orientation, regardless of whether the other variables "B", "C" and "D" change in a significant fashion. Of course, changes in "B", "C", and "D" may well influence the strength of a new policy orientation, resulting from change in "A". Here, it should be remembered only that one variable can have a greater weight than other variables and that it is the decision-maker's perception of the variables that this is the key to their relative importance.

First, as a ready guide, we will summarise, in "more or less" terms, the presumed effects of the environmental variables on the two levels of policy-making.

VARIABLE	POLITICAL ELITE	BUREAUCRATIC ELITE
Military Strength (MS)	More	Less
Political Stability (PS)	More	Less
Public Opinion (PO)	More	Less
Environmental Hostility (EH)	More	Less
Respect for Structure (RS)	Less	More
Issue Salience (IS)	Less	More
RISK-TAKING PROPENSITY (RTP)	Varying (high or low)	Steady (medium)

The following environmental factors would appear to operate in each Foreign Policy Category: [71]

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[71] As we mentioned in our definitions of the various policy categories, RTP is high in the 'intransigent' category; moderate in the 'promotive' category; low in the 'preservative' category and near-zero in the 'acquiescent' category.

PROMOTIVE	PRESERVATIVE	ACQUIESCENT	INTRANSIGENT
high MS	low MS	low MS	high MS
high PS	high PS	high PS	low PS
aggressive PO	pacific PO	pacific PO	aggressive PO
moderate EH	low EH	high EH	high EH
high RS	high RS	low RS	low RS
moderate IS	low IS	high IS	high IS

It would appear the following policy pressures are set in motion by each environmental variable :

Variable Policy Pressures

Military Strength (MS) ------------> High : Intransigent
: Promotive
Low : Preservative
: Acquiescent

Political Stability (PS) -----------> High : Promotive
: Preservative
: Acquiescent
Low : Intransigent

Public Opinion (PO) --------> Aggressive : Intransigent
Promotive
Pacific : Preservative
: Acquiescent

Environmental Hostility (EH-> High : Intransigent
: Acquiescent
: Promotive
Low : Preservative

Respect for Structure (RS) --------->High : Intransigent
: Promotive
: Preservative
Low : Intransigent
: Acquiescent
Issue Salience (IS) ---------------> High : Intransigent
: Acquiescent
Moderate : Promotive
Low : Preservative

The following specific hypothesis, involving the political elite may be put down:

1) With high MS, one expects a high or moderate RTP and pressure for an 'intransigent' or 'promotive' policy. Conversely, with low MS, one expects a low RTP and pressure, for a 'preservative' and 'acquiescent' policy.

2) With high PS, one expects a low RTP and pressure for a 'preservative' or 'acquiescent' policy. Conversely, with low PS, one expects a high RTP and pressure for an 'intransigent' policy. Should the RTP not be too low, 'promotive' pressure will be predominant.

3) With aggressive PO, one expects a high or moderate RTP and pressure for an 'intransigent' or 'promotive' policy. Conversely, if PO is pacific, one expects the RTP to be low and pressure for a 'preservative' or an 'acquiescent' policy.

4) If EH is high, RTP may be high or low, and the policy orientation high or low, depending on the domestic variables. If EH is moderate to high, RTP will be moderate and a 'promotive' stance will be the likely result.

Having discussed the two elites, it will not come as a surprise that the bureaucratic elite-environmental interaction pattern tends to be significantly different from that of the political elite. The key environmental factors affecting policy choices by the former seem to be respect for structure and issue salience. They set in motion pressures, of varying strength, for a 'promotive' policy. The conservative outlook of the bureaucratic elite tends to make it more sensitive to these factors than to those of military strength, public opinion and political stability. By finding much that is good in the existing state of affairs, the bureaucratic elite oppposes overly critical appraisals of, and reversals in, existing policy. Changes can take place only gradually and as a logical, entirely merited consequence, of new conditions. The bureaucratic style, it may be thus seen, mitigates against too great a fluctuation in risk-taking.

__The following specific hypotheses__ concerning the bureaucratic elite may be set down:

> 1) Respect for international structure, reinforced by a conservative ideology, makes for moderate risk-taking and a primarily 'promotive' stance on the part of the bureaucratic elite. The greater theflux in the international system, the more will the bureaucratic elite press for means to control it.
>
> 2) The bureaucratic elite is more sensitive to the international implications of domestic issues. The more an issue is perceived to have the potential to upset the system, the more will the bureaucratic elite opt for a 'promotive' role.

__BRITAIN AND THE SUDETEN ISSUE__

We shall attempt to show the validity of these hypotheses by reference to the British case. We presume there were variations in the policy orientations. An intuitive survey of the period would reveal four phases, each governed by a particular foreign policy type. At this preliminary stage, the table below represents the presumed linkage between the time periods and policy orientations:

TABLE 3

DECISION-MAKING LEVEL	PHASE I (March-April) 1938	PHASE 2 (May-June) 1938	PHASE III (July-August) 1938	PHASE IV (Sept.) 1938
POLITICAL	Preservative	Promotive	Preservative	Acquiescent
BUREAUCRATIC	Promotive	Promotive	Promotive	Promotive

Phase I marked a period of re-thinking in British decision-making circles in the wake of the Austrian Anschluss; Phase II signalled the commencement of Britain's involvement in the problem; Phase III marked a period of vacillation in the British treatment of the matter; and Phase IV saw the climax of the long-smouldering crisis reached in a near-total acquiescence to Hitler's demands. A pronunciation on the actual validity of the time periods must, of course, await the exploration of the linkages between inputs, decision-making processes and foreign policy orientations that we shall undertake in this study. The explanation of the policy variations will not only throw light on the question, "How Munich?" but also examine the empirical relevance of the hypothesis mentioned above. We will thus move one step closer to filling the gap in this area of the literature pointed out by Deutsch and Senghaas.[72] A final note regarding the structure of the chapters should be set out. Chapter II discusses, by way of setting, the European situation in the inter-War period, with special reference to the role that Britain played in it. Chapter III discusses the Political Elite. It opens with a discussion of the elite's basic policy position prior to the period analyzed. It examines the policy dynamics of this period and discusses each policy phase utilizing the following format:

(1) Nature of Policy Orientation
(Dependent Variable)

(2) Risk-taking Propensity
(Intervening Variable)

(3) Causal Factors
(Independent Variables)

In the causal factors section, the variables (i.e. military strength, environmental hostility etc.) with major impact are discussed in separate sections. Other less important variables are only noted in passing where their impact therecf is obvious or negligible.

Chapter IV deals with the Bureaucratic Elite and follows exactly the same format. It should be noted, however, that since the Bureaucratic Elite consistently followed a 'promotive' policy, the whole chapter is treated as one policy phase. Chapter V concludes the dissertation with a review and summary.

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[72] Deutsch and Senghaas, op. cit.

CHAPTER II

THE INTER-WAR EUROPEAN SYSTEM, THE SUDETEN ISSUE AND BRITAIN

This chapter analyses two phenomena, both important to an understanding of the British role in the Sudeten Issue in 1938: one, the European political system in the inter-war period; two, the genesis of the Sudeten Issue itself. Each forms the subject of a separate section.

SECTION I

THE INTER-WAR EUROPEAN SYSTEM: A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

The predominant characteristic of the European political system during the inter-war period was its fluidity. The peace that followed World War 1 was, in the words of one historian, a peace without security. [1] The five treaties enshrining this uneasy peace, of which Versailles is the best known, were themselves the product of much dilation, acrimony and conflict of views. [2] Fundamentally, they were the product of three distinct philosophical outlooks, i.e. American idealism, French realism and British pragmatism. The three nations indeed accepted that the power of Germany would have to be reduced and that it could not be allowed to occupy the position that it did in pre-war Europe. Apart from that, there was neither unanimity nor clarity amongst them regarding the European political system. France wanted to revert to the balance of power system that had prevailed before the war but the Americans wished not for "a new balance of power" but a "community of power." Britain, nearer to France, politically as well as geographically and impressed by the French continental anxiety, was, nevertheless, inclined towards the Wilsonian plan. [3] Nowhere was this more apparent than over the issue of the Rhineland. France, as is well known, wanted to separate the Rhineland from Germany and constitute it as a separate state. With the western frontier of Germany fixed on the Rhine, the bridges over the Rhine could be easily controlled and controlled permanently by an allied force. The French reasoning was simple; if German power could be somehow kept below a certain point, financially, industrially and strategically, Germany could not pose a threat to the European system again. The United States flatly refused to consent to such a dismemberment of Germany. Britain, though cognizant of the strategic advantages of controlling the Rhine, was reluctant to assume the political responsibility of keeping the Rhineland separate. Ultimately, an agreement emerged to occupy the Rhineland only temporarily but de-militarize it permanently.* As a compromise, this was fine but, as with the other compromises in the Versailles Treaty, it satisfied neither France nor Germany. It crippled the French in their efforts to impose upon the European system the desired structure, and it served as a constant reminder to the Germans of the humiliation they had suffered at Versailles. If the Versailles Treaty revealed a confusion of intent amongst its creators, the European system it gave rise to was marked by a certain instability of content.

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[1] Fritz Ruck, Friede Ohne Sicherheit (Stockholm: Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1945)

[2] Harold Nicholson, Peace-making, 1919 (London: 1945).

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[3] William J. Newman, The Balance of Power in the Inter-War Years, 1919-1939 (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 16.

In the constantly shifting European kaleidoscope, however, three main stages can be discerned. One, the period from 1919 to 1924, the primary characteristic of which was the play of forces around France; two, the Locarno period from 1925 - 1932, the predominant tendency of which was a sustained effort at a compromise of differing national positions, with Britain playing a major role; three, the period from 1933 - 1938, the main characteristic of which was the concentration of forces around Germany and France, Germany being the moving force.

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* Harold I. Nelson, Land and Power: British and Allied Policy on Germany's Frontiers (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 375-76. Nelson states that President Wilson's categorical refusal to dismember Germany was the crucial factor in the British decision.

PERIOD I (1919-1924)

France occupied the focal position on the European stage during this period. Her desires had a catalytic effect on the behaviour of other nations, either in a positive or negative fashion.

As an authority on the subject has observed, France was inspired not so much by the desire for security against war as by the desire for security in war. [5] France could not believe the war that had just ended, that had cost her so dearly, had been a war to end all wars. She saw the resumption of full scale hostilities with Germany as almost certain. She saw Germany as a "powerful and relentless machine which was being slowly wound up for another spring." [6] She wanted to be ready for this, to control it before it devastated her, as it had done in the war just over. If possible, she wanted this future war to be fought mainly outside of France; she wanted also that it be brought to a successful conclusion quickly, before Germany could mobilize her superior manpower and industrial potential. For this to be accomplished, France felt that she should have a superior military force at her disposal at all times. She feared, however, that she could not muster such a force all by herself. It was thus natural for her to turn towards a system of building military alliances in Europe.

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[5] W.M. Jordan, Great Britain, France and the German Problem 1919-1939: A Study of Anglo-French Relations in the Making and Maintenance of the Versailles Settlement(London:Oxford University Press, 1943), p.190 Jordan observes that the distinction was made by Sir J. Hedlam Morley.

[6] Ibid., p. 6.

France would have preferred, above all, the perpetuation of military ties which had bound her to Britain during the conduct of the war. But as we shall see, British reluctance in this respect was rather pronounced. Failing Britain, France turned towards those states more amenable to her brand of politics. These were certain states that lay to the east of Germany, primarily Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. [7] Anti-German sentiment was more pronounced in the first two, and it was with them that France signed defence-oriented treaties - with Poland, on 9 February, 1921 and with Czechoslovakia on 25 January, 1924. These treaties did not become formal military alliances until Locarno (1925), but to all intents and purposes, they can be regarded as such. With Poland, indeed, a secret military convention had accompanied the treaty, providing for staff consultations in military planning and the delivery of armaments by the French. [8] No such convention accompanied the treaty with Czechoslovakia but, since January 1919, when Benes had asked the French to establish a military mission in Prague, Czechoslovakia and France had cooperated closely on the military level and, in fact, the Czechoslovak plan 'N' for an offensive against Bavaria was formulated in close concert with France.[9] As for Yugoslavia, though France did not conclude a treaty with her until much later she had arrived at an informal military understanding with her as well. Further, Yugoslavia had joined with Rumania and Czechoslovakia in creating the anti-Hungarian Little Entente of which France served as an overarching protector since such an arrangement would work to her benefit.[10] French support made the Entente members feel more secure against Hungary and they, in turn, gave the French additional security against Germany, whom the Hungarians had supported in World War I. France had, after all, contained Austria in the 18th century through alliances with Austria's smaller neighbours.[11] In the anxiety-ridden post-War atmosphere, this historical memory probably made containment of Germany through similar means a feasible alternative. The main aim was, nevertheless, an adequate preparation for war.

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[7] Piotr S. Wandycz, France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962).

[8] loc. cit., pp. 217-19.

Though the Eastern alliances and the alliance with Belgium were valuable, the French did not regard them as diplomatic victories. After all, Belgium lived as much in fear of the Germans as did France and common interest, therefore, dictated such an alliance. What France would have regarded as a diplomatic victory would undoubtedly have been the signing of a military alliance with Britain. During the

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[9] Ibid., pp. 280-81.
[10] E.H. Carr, International Relations Betwen the Two World Wars, 1919-1939(New York: Harper and Row, 1947), p. 42.
[11] Ibid., p. 30

Versailles negotiations, Britain had, in fact, in concert with the United States, agreed to guarantee France against German invasion. Nothing had come of this assurance since the United States, due to the Senate's not ratifying the Versailles Treaty, had backed out of her commitment. This Anglo-American commitment, had it come about, would probably not have complied with the French desire for pledges of concrete military assistance but it would have been a recognition of common military interests and possibly have led to conversations at staff level. The latter were indeed, what the French had hoped for. [12] It was a point that they stressed in the negotiations that they started with the British for an Anglo-French pact. It was not the only point they stressed. They wanted Britain to give a commitment to East Europe as well. [13] These were points that Britain could not accept. She could not identify herself with the intransigence of France. Her outlook with respect to Europe was primarily 'promotive'. She might have agreed to the Anglo-French Pact, though not to an East European guarantee, during the Versailles negotiations. The atmosphere in Britain in 1921, however, was not what it had been the previous year. As Hajo Holborn has recorded, "in less than a year after the signing of the treaty of Versailles, she developed, if not a new European policy, at least a new attitude towards European problems."[14] The precipitate withdrawal of America from the European scene and her own preoccupation with imperial and oceanic problems were amongst the more important factors accounting for this change. It is not suprising that the British judged the two French demands to be at variance, in a not inconsiderable measure, with the Gladstonian dictum that "England should keep entirely in her own hands the means of estimating her own obligations upon the various states of facts as they arise."[15] A military convention made a commitment more automatic than the British wanted and East Europe certainly did not seem to involve any vital British interest. "The British people," Lloyd George said to Briand in 1921,

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[12] Jordan, op. cit., pp. 196-97.
[13] Wandycz, op. cit., pp. 253-54.

> are not very much interested in what happened on the Eastern frontier of Germany; they would not be ready to be involved in quarrels that might arise regarding Poland or Danzig or upper Silesia. On the contrary, there was a general reluctance to get mixed up in these questions....[16]

The French might not have insisted on this guarantee of East Europe. But Poincare, the successor to Briand as Prime Minister, insisted persistently on a military convention, believing it to be the only way by which British participation in the defence of France could be made meaningful.[17] By short-sightedly insisting on getting all, the French ended up by getting nothing. This all-or-nothing attitude of Poincare's was as much a reflection of his growing impatience with the British as it was of his growing belief that, in the ultimate analysis, it would have to be the French whc would have to uphold the Versailles treaty.[18] This latter belief was to manifest itself in 1923 through the unilateral occupation by France of the Ruhr. But as far as an Anglo-French pact was concerned,the opportunity had passed by. France would have been wise to have accepted the British offer of 1922, for what Britain was prepared to give in 1922, it was not ready to grant in 1923; and what it was ready to offer in 1923, it moved away from in 1924. Efforts by France to get Britain to commit herself through the League to defend the existing order in Europe were thus doomed to failure. Britain did not like the obligatory nature of the assistance suggested in the 1923 Treaty of Mutual Assistance drafted by the Temporary Mixed Commission of the League.[19] Neither did she like the provisions in the 1924 Geneva Protocol, according to which a nation refusing to submit to compulsory arbitration would automatically be declared an aggressor.[20] The pact that Britain entered into in 1925, was essentially different from the pact she might have accepted at an earlier date, had France been less 'intransigent'.

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[14] Hajo Holborn, The Political Collapse of Europe(New York: Alfred Knopf, 1951), p. 121.
[15] Jordan, op. cit., p. 201.
[16] Great Britain, Papers respecting Negotiations for an Anglo-French Pact, Cmd. 2169, HMSO, 1924, pp. 112-13.

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[17] Without it, he claimed, the Pact would be a "mystification without any real value." Ibid., p. 13.

[18] Rene Albrecht-Carrie, France, Europe and the Two World Wars(Paris: Librarie Minard, 1960), P. 126.

[19] W.N. Medlicott, British Foreign Policy since Versailles, 1919-1963(2d ed. rev. London: Methuen and Co., 1966), pp. 71-2.

The 1923 occupation of the Ruhr by France was not only a manifestation of her resentment at Germany's great reluctance to pay reparations which France considered vital to her economy, it was also a manifestation of her determination to uphold the distribution of power enshrined in the Versailles Treaty. It is unnecessary to give the details of the occupation here. It is sufficient to note that France acted against the considered wishes of the British Government and in possible contravention of the Treaty itself.[21] Germany after an initial show of resistance, was forced to acquiesce to the French demands. But the French success was achieved at great cost. Her economy suffered because of the occupation and she had to ultimately accept the British view that Germany could as much pay reparations as a sinking boat could carry cargo.[22] As Sontag has succinctly stated, "Forced at last to choose between a weak Germany and Germany strong enough to pay reparations, the French chose reparation."[23]

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[20] Ibid., p. 73.

[21] H. Lichtenberger, The Ruhr Conflict(Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1923), pp. 1-2.

[22] It was Keynes who most forcefully propagated this view in The Economic Consequences of Peace(New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920). For a rejoinder see Etienne Mantoux, "The Economic Consequences of Mr. Keynes - A French View," The Versailles Settlement, ed. Ivo J. Lederer (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1960).

This, indeed, was a new trend in French thinking. As fundamental as the realization of the interdependence of the economies of European nations was the realization that, in the absence of active cooperation from Britain, France could not hope to uphold the order established by the Versailles treaty. France just did not have the means to do so. An undertaking like the Ruhr occupation could not easily be repeated. This inability of France to "go it alone" in the future was further underlined by the French failure to install, in the face of British opposition, a separatist regime in the Rhineland Palatinate. The Ruhr occupation has been rightly called a "turning point in the history of post-war Europe."[24] It marked the end of one stage and the beginning of a new one. It was the climatic episode in the French pursuit of power; it marked, too, the beginning of that power's decline.[25] Forced to accept the failure of its "forward" policy, France resigned herself to a role that was essentially defensive and whose natural culmination was the Maginot Line. The preponderant role in the European political system was now to be played by Britain.

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[23] Raymond Sontag, A Broken World(New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 118.
[24] Carr, op. cit., p. 54.
[25] Power is here used in its relative connotation, not as an absolute attribute of one nation but as one which draws its meaning from the relations which exist between nations.

PERIOD II (1925-1932)

As Jordan has perceptively observed, whereas the French relied on coercion, the British relied cn consent as the mainstay of European peace. [26] The peace that relied for its existence on a particular distribution of power was, in their eyes, anything but stable. From the structural perspective, Britain no longer saw the European political system in terms of balance of power. "That supposedly traditional concept of British policy," states Jordan, "was consciously rejected." [27] The British ideal now was a Europe "whose ordering should command such general assent that the very justice of its arrangements would provide the true guarantee of their maintenance." [28] What made it possible for the British to think in these terms was that, unlike the French, they did not believe that enmities in international relations were permanent or that Germany, in particular, was incorrigible. The German fleet had been destroyed and the British regarded the immediate future with complacency. Beyond the immediate future, they could see a stable peace arising only if Germany was welcomed back in the comity of nations, with all the dignity and respect a great power deserved. Not unnaturally, therefore, they started doubting in increasing numbers, the durability and the long term validity of the Versailles agreement.

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[26] Jordan, op. cit., p. 1. In this context, Arnold Wolfers has observed that "nothing was more amazing than the hold which Wilsonian principles were able to gain on public opinion throughout the British Isles and the Dominions in the post-war years." Arnold Wolfers, *Britain and France betwen Two Wars;Conflicting Strategies of Peace since Versailles* (rep. New York: Norton, 1966), p. 216

[27] Jordan, op. cit., p. 2.

[28] Ibid.

The revisionist school of thought, given a great impetus by Keynes,[29] rapidly grew stronger. The increasingly powerful Labour Party, for example, made revision of the Treaty one of the cardinal tenets of its foreign policy platform.[30] Concomitantly, with the revisionist trend there grew an impatience with the French for thinking in what were perceived as archaic frames of reference. The British were not unmindful of the French desire for security, but they thought of security as security against war and were baffled that the French did not think likewise. In any case, they saw it as their role to restrain France from the extreme course she was tending to adopt in the years immediately following the War. Thus, they refused the French demand that the German war leaders, Hindenburg, Ludendorff and Bethmann-Hollweg, be tried as war criminals; they pressed for some fairness to Germany in the matter of dividing Upper Silesia and they continuously tried, in the interest of general economic recovery, to moderate the French view on Reparations. They strongly criticized the precipitate French action in the Ruhr in 1923, and in December of the same year they refused to recognize the separatist regime the French were trying to establish in the Palatinate.

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[29] Through the publication of his book, The Economic Consequences of Peace. For the tremendous impact this book had on British thought, see Martin Gilbert, The Roots of Appeasement (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966), pp. 62-7.

[30] Carl F. Brand, The British Labour Party: A Short History (Stanford: Hoover, 1974), pp. 60-62.

December 1923 marked the lowest point in Anglo-French relations during the inter-war period. The occasion of a change of government in Britain provided France with an opportunity to abandon the lone road she had been following in Europe. Following the presentation in British Parliament in January 1924 of the anti-separatist Clive report on the Rhineland,[31] the French repudiated the separatist regime there. Moreover, they sat down with the British and the Americans to thoroughly review the tangled reparations situation. The Dawes Plan of April 1924 was the result.[32] We need not concern ourselves with its details. Suffice it to say that not only did it provide an equitable solution to the problem of reparations, but it also provided measures for Germany to recover her economic prosperity.[33] Germany was thus put back on what the British believed was the road to her rightful place in Europe. The prospect of an economically resurgent Germany could not have been very pleasing to the French, but there was little they could do under the circumstances. Their acceptance of the Dawes Plan, as Newman has put it, was a public acknowledgment that France "would not and could not act independently against Germany, but must have an ally against her.[34]

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[31] Great Bitain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), January 21, 1924.

[32] Adopted at the London Conference, July-August, 1924.

[33] Medlicott, op. cit., p. 56.

This recognition by France of the limitations of power in the European system was the fundamental factor behind her amenability to the Locarno accord of 1925.[35] The accord established the sanctity of the common frontier between Germany and France, a sanctity that Britain promised to uphold.[36] In practical terms, what this implied was that France could no longer repeat with impunity her occupation of the Ruhr in 1923. Forced to follow a 'promotive' path, not out of conviction but out of necessity France, however, did get a promise of security from the nation she valued most, even though it was a security against war rather than in war. There is no doubt that, for the British, the deterrent value of the guarantee was what mattered. They personally did not envisage the possibility of one day having to exercise it. The accord put for them in a proper perspective the primarily 'promotive' role that they envisaged for themselves in the European political system. Although there is some dispute whether the fundamental provision of the accord - mutual respect for the Franco-German frontier - originated with the British,[37] there is no doubt that they played an active role in bringing the French and Germans together at the conference table.[38] This, in itself, was a considerable achievement for, as the British Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, declared at the time,

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[34] Newman, op. cit., p. 56.

[35] Locarno meant for France, in the words of one authority, an "entente with Britain and detente with Germany...(it) offered the prospect of German goodwill and the promise of British aid in case that goodwill was not forthcoming." cf. Jon Jacobson, Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 38-9.

[36] Ibid., pp. 60-67.

> the French are very fearful and, therefore, often unwise and aggravating and the Germans seem singularly obtuse to their own interest and the effect of what they say and do upon French opinion."[39]

The Locarno accord was seen by Chamberlain not only to have allayed French fears, but also to have been in line with his self-proclaimed task of making "the new position of Germany tolerable to the German people."[40] No wonder that he felt inclined to characterize it "the real dividing line between the years of war and the years of peace."[1] He, like many of his fellow - countrymen, was inclined to believe that the spirit of Locarno would continue to govern the relations between France and Germany. In this, they underestimated both the depth of German resentment over the Versailles Settlement and the degree of French suspicion of Germany.

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[37] This was certainly the prevailing French view. Lord D'Abernon, the British Ambassador in Germany, was believed to have been instrumental in getting the German Government to think on these lines. According to Stambrook, the proposal, in its formative stage, was referred to by them as "Das Kind" - The Child. F.G. Stambrook, "Das Kind - Lord D'Abernon and the Origins of the Locarno Pact," Central European History, I, 3 (1968), pp. 203-263. Whatever the British Ambassador's role in the matter - Stambrook makes a convincing case for it - the fact remains that he did have an extremely good relationship with both Stresemann and the State Secretary, Schubert. His strong advocacy of the proposal, in any case, impressed the British Foreign Secretary at that time, Sir Austen Chamberlain.

[38] For a detailed insight into the diplomacy behind Locarno, see Jacobson, op. cit., pp. 1-67.

[39] Austen Chamberlain to King George V, 15 February, 1925. Cited in Harold Nicholson, King George V (London: Constable, 1952), p. 407.

[40] Ibid.

Nowhere was this more apparent than in the matter of Germany's Eastern frontiers. The British declined the French request for a guarantee of these frontiers on the rather specious grounds that increasing security in the west would lessen the danger of war in the East.[2] The French thereupon gave this guarantee themselves as they did not set great store by the Treaties of Arbitration that Germany had signed with both Czechoslovakia and Poland at the same time. If Britain could guarantee only security against war, they themselves would have to guarantee security in war. The Maginot mentality had still not taken hold of France. Germany, on the other hand, was quite firm on the desirability of modifications of her Eastern borders. The 'promotive' spirit of Locarno could have made her extend the idea of compromise to any other matter but this. Of all the grievances arising out of Versailles, the loss of their Eastern territories stung the Germans the most. "No German Foreign Minister," Newman rightly observes, "could have accepted a treaty system that in any way acknowledged the Eastern frontiers of Europe."[63] The recovery of these lost territories, most of which lay in Poland, had become an idee fixe with most Germans, causing wide-spread empathy with the nationalist call for a rapid acquisition of power by Germany so that she could regain all that she had lost. Such being the depth of German resentment, one could hardly see a compromise ever arising over the matter. The British, nevertheless, still hoped for one. Germany, they felt, would realize that Locarno had obtained for her the hope of rehabilitation, not freedom from retribution.

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[1] Quoted by Carr, op. cit., p. 97.
[2] Newman, op. cit., p. 25.

Britain, therefore, did not undertake to redress either the territorial or any of the other outstanding German grievances - the Saar Occupation, the War Guilt clause, non-union with Austria, limitations on armament and the demilitarization of the Rhineland. The last - mentioned had been indeed guaranteed by her at Locarno. Britain, however, did sympathize with the German demand for an early end to the occupation of the Rhineland. The French, however were reluctant to give up the financial control of Germany that the occupation entailed.[64] It was only when the British declared that their own troops would be withdrawn in any case that France relented. She agreed to a complete Allied evacuation by January 30, 1930, five years before it was legally supposed to end. A direct result of this premature withdrawal was the decision by the French to construct the Maginot Line - the most advanced fortification system to date. This Line, as Albrecht-Carrie has observed, was an expression of and an impetus to the prevalence of a defensive mentality in France.[45] This mentality was to have tremendous impact upon the European political system of the future. It was bound to increase scepticism amongst her allies as to whether France could or would honour her commitments. It was bound, also, to encourage France to look increasingly upon her Eastern alliances from a deterrent perspective, i.e., security againgst war. This would be a perspective different from the one she had started with.[46]

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[63] Newman, op. cit., p. 87.

[64] For a detailed survey of the conflicting views underlying the Occupation, see Jacobson, op. cit., pp. 279-349.

The steady, secret rearmament of Germany was seen as a disease that could not be eradicated except through mutual endeavour. But all that the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference did during its many months of sitting was to "conclusively establish that they had to deal with irreconciliable approaches."[47] The French thought the British attitude of disarmament before security to be a dangerous illusion, the British felt that logically disarmament would have to lead to security. "British yearning for peace," observes Jordan, "found expression in a deep aversion of whatever savoured of preparations for war."[48] In fact, Britain had over the years drastically reduced her own military strength.[49] At the end of World War I, she had been left with an Army of 3 million officers and men, a Navy of 4000 ships (of which 60 were cruisers) and an Air Force that boasted a first line strength of 3000 aeroplanes with 20,000 in reserve.[50] Within a few years, her Army was "smaller than in 1914 and was not organized for war in Europe."[51] Her Navy did not suffer as much but by the thirties, "professional opinion held that the limit of fifty cruisers imposed by the London Treaty of 1930 was twenty less than the smallest number needed to safeguard ocean trade."[52] Her Air Force, however, was reduced considerably:

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[45] Albrecht-Carrie, op. cit., pp. 183-84.

[46] As we have mentioned earlier, France had started the post-war era convinced that another war with Germany was a near-certainty. Germany had been merely laid low, not definitively beaten and could thus be expected to aggress again. Her (France's) aim, therefore, at this stage, was to prepare for this war. It was to obtain security in war, to achieve a strategic superiority that would lead her to ultimate victory. Security against war was a concept that cast the possibility of war in some doubt. Its aim was to achieve a strategic position (not necessarily that of superiority) that would deter Germany from any contemplated aggression.

> By 1921 (writes Collier), its whole strength barely sufficed to meet the needs of the army and navy for direct support...as for air defences, they were so vigorously pruned that, within 2 years, nothing was left except a substantial

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[47] Albrecht-Carrie, op. cit., p. 181.
[48] Jordan, op. cit., p. 155.
[49] Basil Collier, The Defence of the United Kingdom, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957).
[50] Ibid., p. 5.
[51] Ibid., p. 21
[52] Ibid., pp 21-22.

> quantity of stored equipment, a small Anti-Aircraft School and the nucleus of an Anti-Aircraft Brigade."[53]

In 1928, the notorious ten-year rule, first promulgated soon after the War, was extended by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Winston Churchill. According to this rule, Britain would formulate her defence budget on the assumption that no major European war could be expected within the next ten years. "We have," rightly claimed Ramsay MacDonald in 1931, "gone pretty nearly to the limit of example."[54] That the British felt they could go no further by way of example was shown by their rejection of an American proposal that all nations reduce forthwith existing armaments by one third.[55] But the British example was one France could not bring herself to follow. From the Tardieu plan for an international police force to the Paul Boncour plan for the ear-marking of national contingents for League duty, from the Simon plan for the abolition of patently offensive weapons to the MacDonald plan for a limitation of standing armies to 200,000 each, the Disarmament Conference of 1932 was a tale of ill-starred efforts to resolve the basic issue of security versus disarmament.[56] The only concrete result of the Conference, brought about at the initiative of Italy was the recognition of Germany's claim to "an equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations."[57] Locarno had bestowed respectability upon Germany by allowing her to join the League; the Geneva Disarmament Conference recognised her growing influence in the European political system, even though armament equality was granted only in principle.

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[53] Ibid., p. 5.

[54] Great Britain, 254 *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), June 29, 1931.

[55] H.R. Wilson, *Disarmament and the Cold War in the Thirties* (New York: Vantage, 1963).

[56] Ibid.

The Italian role in the Locarno period is interesting in that Italy was the co-guarantor with Britain of the Locarno pact. This arose as much out of Italy's claim to be a great power as out of the cordial relationship that existed with Britain. Italy, nevertheless, saw her general role in the European system somewhat differently. Whereas, Britain was essentially concerned with bringing about a consensus in the system, Italy's purpose was essentially to secure a counterpoise to France . Basically a revisionist power, Italy had in the aftermath of Versailles borne grudges against France and Britain for not giving her enough of the colonial spoils.[58] Consequently, during this period, she had largely withdrawn into a 'preservative' shell as far as European affairs were concerned. Whereas, the anti-British grudge was temporary, the anti-French sentiment had remained because of French support for Yugoslavia, a major threat to Italy's Balkan ambitions. France had the Little Entente behind her; Italy had the anti-Entente nations, Hungary and Austria, in her camp. France shunned contacts with the Soviet Union; Italy was ostentatious in the cultivation of her Soviet ties. In spite of Locarno France hesitated to develop contact with Germany; Italy was one of the first powers to sign a commercial agreement with her. Locarno seemed to encourage Italy to switch from a primarily 'preservative' to a primarily 'promotive' role. She worked constantly to elevate Germany's international status, so long as the latter recognized the Italian interest in Austria.[59] Her intervention on Germany's behalf at the Disarmament Conference has already been noted. Her propagation of the Four Power pact in March 1933 was also in line with her conceived systemic role. What the pact suggested was that the four powers, France, Germany, Britain and Italy,[60]

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[57] Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933-1936* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 40

[58] Denis Mack Smith, *Italy: A Modern History*(Rev. ed.: Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), pp. 314-21.

> a) acknowledge their natural right to impose their joint will on the European system so as to maintain peace,
> b) declare it as their common policy to revise the peace treaty,
> c) recognize Germany's right for a mutual parity in armaments, and
> d) adopt a common line of conduct in colonial matters.

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[59] For a perceptive analysis of the main trends in Italian foreign policy, see Christopher Seton-Watson, Italy from Liberalism to Fascism, 1870-1925 (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 527-36.

[60] Maxwell H.H. Macartney and Paul Cremona, Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy 1914-1937(London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 226.

French resentment at the proposed pact was great, but that of her Eastern allies was greater. They saw it as a denial of the system of alliances they had built over the years with France. The latter might have done well to have rejected the pact outright rather than try to amend it and eventually sign it. The less than vigorous French reaction increased doubts in the general efficacy of her commitments, doubts already in existence because of the Maginot Line. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Poland. As Albrech-Carrie has stated, "the barometer of international politics was set to change." [61] A new aligment of powers was in the offing.

Locarno had indeed modified the system under which Europe had been functioning before 1925. In the light of what was to follow in the thirties it can also be said to have weakened it.

PERIOD III (1933-1938)

During the first period, as we have seen, the European political system revolved essentially around France, with Italy and the Soviet Union playing peripheral roles, Germany almost prostrate and Britain cast in the negative role of restraining France. The second period was marked by a more active participation in the system by various sub-systems with accommodation rather than coercion as the basis of intra-systemic relations. Three distinct groupings could be discerned, France and her allies, Italy and her allies, and Germany with her near-ally Russia. Britain cast herself in a mediatory, quasi-neutral role. If the first period was unifocal, the second period may properly be described as multifocal. The third period saw the forces in the system divide themselves around France and Germany respectively, with Britain being caught roughly somewhere in the middle.

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[61] Albrecht-Carrie, op. cit., p. 238.

The new structure that the European political system gradually assumed was not so much a result of change in basic German systemic goals as in the introduction of a new determination and an unorthodox use of coercion to achieve them. Hitler, like his predecessors, wanted to free Germany from her servitudes, recover her lost territories, expand German power in the East [42] and generally regain for Germany, the European influence she had lost. But unlike his predecessors, he was not prepared to accept the methods of conciliation and accommodation to achieve these goals. He was prepared to take extraordinary risks and he knew intuitively the limits of the risks he could take. He valued force as an instrument of policy and prided himself on its unconventional use.[63] No leader knew better than he the value of a threat and no leader used it to better effect. He had a contempt for gradualism but until over-confidence started impairing his judgement, knew when to wait. Essentially an opportunist, he knew how to confuse and unnerve his opponents. He could tell when his means were limited and he could use the means he possessed in the most economical way. A master of minimax strategy, he knew how to achieve maximum pay-offs at minimum cost. He was the master, too, of the 'master' race - and he was determined that the world should know it.

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[42] In this respect, Hitler might be said to have gone beyond his predecessors, interpreting, as he did, German expansion in the East strictly in territorial terms. As Weinberg has succinctly stated, two ideas were central to his ideological make-up : one, the doctrine of space; the other, the doctrine of race. Czechoslovakia offended him on both counts. Weinberg, op. cit., pp. 2-9 and 69-70. Ironically, the name "Hitler" was Czech in origin. cf. Gerhard Weinberg, "Czechoslovakia and Germany," Czechoslovakia, Past and Present, ed. Miloslav Rechcigl (Hague: Mouton, 1968).

Hitler's first challenge to the existing system came in October 1933, nine months after his assumption of power. Overriding the advice given to him by his subordinates, he decided to withdraw Germany from both the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations, ostensibly in protest at Germany's continued subjection to armament restrictions. To minimize adverse comment on his move, he simultaneously proclaimed his faith in disarmament and his readiness to sign non-aggression pacts with those who wanted them. His next diplomatic coup was to sign a non-aggression pact, in January 1934, with Poland, thus effectively crippling France's security system in the East. Hitler felt this pay-off to be more important than the continuance of an enmity which stretched back to Versailles and beyond. Characteristically, he defended his action as a major contribution to world peace, an explanation capable of easy belief in view of the potential explosiveness of the Polish Corridor problem. In fact, observes Alan Bullock, "the word peace was never out of Hitler's mouth at this time." ** Simultaneously with these protestations of peace, however, Hitler was secretly rearming Germany. The White paper published by the British Government in March 1935 laid stress on this disturbing development. Hitler thereupon decided upon a bold counter-stroke. Denouncing the military restrictions imposed by the Versailles treaty, he declared that Germany would introduce conscription in order to raise her armies to 550, 000 men (the Versailles treaty had limited Germany to 100, 000). He justified his on the grounds of self-preservation. The challenge to the status quo was blatant. In announcing rearmament, he more or less signified his intention of putting Germany on an 'intransigent' course.

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[63] As Weinberg has perceptively pointed out, "War was to be a key instrument of policy, not the last resort, but in some cases the preferred approach...if you decided that your opponent must give in absolutely or you would go to war, the process of negotiations would be one in which your demands would be constantly raised as deadlock approached, not reduced as the parties move toward a compromise. Weinberg, Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany, op. cit., p. 8.

Hitler had indeed taken a risk. But the only response

** Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny(Rev. ed.; London: Penguin, 1962), p. 329.

of the major powers was to censure him, both at the special conference at Stresa in April 1935 and in the League Council at Geneva. Their censure, however, was empty of resolve. Britain, for one, countenanced the very act that she had condemned by signing a naval agreement with Germany shortly thereafter. This clear contradiction in British behavior was a reflection of her indignation at Hitlerian tactics on the one side, and the sympathy she felt for some of the German demands on the other. It was also a manifestation of her increasing uncertainty over her proper role in the European political system. The French, though confused by the British ambivalence, were not confused about their own system maintenance role. Their lack of resolve over Hitler's unilateral repudiation of disarmament stemmed partly from the perceived British ambivalence and partly from the knowledge of their own vulnerability. This dilemna was to continue reinforcing the 'preservative' side of French foreign policy during the next few years. Italy, on the other hand, was caught between her long-standing revisionist orientation and her new-found interest in the status quo.

If the censure was essentially devoid of content, the anti-German front established at Stresa, France hoped, would deter Hitler from flouting the system again. French policy had reverted to what it had been in the first period, viz. the assurance of her security through the building of alliances in Europe. If the emphasis then had been on security in war, the emphasis now was security through deterrence. The twc countries that France turned her main attention to were the Soviet Union and Italy, both revisionist, both hitherto unfriendly, but both alarmed by Germany's resurgence, Russia because of Hitler's pronounced anti-Bolshevist tendencies [65] and Italy because of Hitler's barely concealed interest in Austria. [66]

France had, in the autumn of 1932, signed a non-aggression pact with Russia. But this had not been enough for her. As a follow-up, she wanted Russia to join her in guaranteeing the frontier between Germany and the Slavic nations, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Russia, reversing her revisionist stand on the Peace Treaties, was not averse to the idea. [67] Britain, whom France consulted, however, felt that Germany should be involved in the guarantee as well. What she had in mind was a pact based on the Locarno model. But Germany's Eastern frontiers had a meaning for her that her Western frontiers did not have. She could accept the latter as she had done at Locarno. The former,however, was a different story. The so-called Eastern Locarno Pact was, thus, still-born. Poland, on its part, was averse to accepting a Russian guarantee of her border with Germany. This aversion was, however, not shared by Czechoslovakia. The way was thus paved for two important pacts involving Russia. One was the Pact of Mutual Assistance, signed with France on May 2, 1935; the other was a similar pact with Czechoslovakia, signed a fortnight later. Russian assistance in the latter was, however, made conditional upon France honoring her own long-standing commitment to Czechoslovakia.

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[65] Robert D. Warth, Soviet Russia in World Politics (New York: Twayne, 1963), p. 169. As Warth puts it, Hitler's assumption of office was "an event that was not only a shattering blow to Soviet diplomacy but an ideological defeat for Communism far more serious than the fiasco in China."

[66] Macartney and Cremona, op. cit., pp. 150-51.

[67] Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy 1917- 73 (2d ed. rev.; New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 223-27. According to Ulam, Russia's main aim in signing these treaties was not so much to get allies in a war as to prevent such a war from occurring. She thus sought, not security in war but against war. The combined effect of the two treaties was to enhance the growing reputation of the Soviet Union as the staunch defender of collective security."

With Italy, too, the main initiative came from Barthou, the French Foreign Minister at this time. Yugoslavia had been the perennial source of tension in Franco - Italian relations and Barthou's first task had been to bring the three together. The murder of the Yugoslav king (along with Barthou) by one of the many irredentist Croats harboured by Italy turned Yugoslav thoughts away from reconciliation. Despite this setback and despite the knowledge that he might alienate Yugoslavia, Laval, Barthou's successor, went ahead with the plan for a Franco-Italian rapprochement. He found Mussolini only too willing. In July, 1934, Dollfuss, the pro-fascist Austrian Chancellor, had been killed in an abortive coup by the Austrian Nazis, whose month long agitation had been covertly supported by Hitler. Mussolini, who had enjoyed a special relationship with the Austrian

Government, had been gravely upset.[68] Not unnaturally, therefore, the agreement that he signed with Laval in January, 1935, stressed their mutual interest in the continued preservation of Austria. More valuable, from the French perspective, was the general agreement for military cooperation on land and in the air against Germany.[69] There was one part of the agreement, though not related to Europe, that was to have significant repercussions on the European political system in the month that followed. This was a secret understanding given by Laval to Mussolini that Italy have a free hand in Abyssinia, a territory she had long coveted.[70]

When Italy marched against Abyssinia, however, France found herself at odds with Britain over the matter. She found the British demand for League sanctions against Italy rather grotesque in view of their implications for the newly created Stresa Front. Whether British support for the League was the result of misplaced idealism, as, for example, Macartney and Cremona believe,[71] or inspite of her strategic pre-occupation with the Mediterranean, as L.R. Pratt has suggested,[72] it certainly highlighted the inconsistent nature of her European role. If her aim in Europe was to contain Germany, it was quite unrealistic to have demanded a move certain to wreck the Stresa pact. If it was not to contain Germany, her participation in the Stresa conference had been quite unnecessary. The Abyssinian imbroglio only served to move Italy closer to Germany as she moved along her 'intransigent' path.

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[68] Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany*, op. cit. pp. 89-105.

[69] Newman, op. cit., p. 134.

[70] L.B. Namier, *Europe in Decay: A Study in Disintegration* (London: MacMillan, 1950), pp. 16-17.

[71] Macartney and Cremona, op. cit., p. 137.

[72] L.R. Pratt, *East of Malta, West of Suez*(London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 8.

While the attention of the Western powers was focused on Abyssinia, Hitler carried out what was his boldest coup so far. Against the earnest advice of his generals, he ordered his troops into the Rhineland, whose demilitarization Versailles had enshrined and Locarno had reaffirmed. Hitler defended his action on the thin grounds that the recently ratified Franco-Soviet pact of mutual assistance had rendered Locarno inoperative. His action, he argued, should be properly construed as a positive step against the spread of Bolshevism in the European system.[73] Whatever the other states may have felt, France certainly did not construe his bold act in the same light. Part of the French Cabinet was for immediate military action against Germany, but the majority deferred to the military view that to mount such an operation, France would not only have to mobilize, but also be assured of the help of her allies. Mobilization was considered impractical because of the impending elections and of her allies, only Poland was willing to march against Germany. Britain, who at Locarno had declared that any unilateral re-militarization of the Rhineland by Germany would be regarded by her as a _causus foederis_ would not give France the promised support.[74] British non-support was, perhaps, due to her weak military position relative to her global commitments. Perhaps, it was due to the pacifist opinion and revisionist sentiment in the country and amongst the Dominions. All she was prepared to do was to transform the two-sided guarantee given at Locarno into a direct guarantee of French territorial integrity against any German invasion. She was also prepared to start conversations with the French in order to prepare for such a contingency. This was, no doubt a radical departure from her prior position on continental commitments. As A. J. P. Taylor has remarked, "Great Britain was committed for the first time in her history to a peace time alliance with a continental Great Power.[75] But this commitment met only the needs of the future, not the demands of the moment. It proved insufficient to make France take any action against Hitler. The French non-action only served to confirm her primarily 'preservative' policy orientation. Its implications were best summed by Alan Bullock when he wrote,

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[73] Hitler's anti-Bolshevist utterances probably struck a sympathetic chord in influential British circles. Martin Gilbert has written, "In society circles, where wealth and property were important, and class distinctions upheld with religous zeal, Communism seemed far more destructive than Nazism...In aristocratic circles, Hitler's stance as the stalwart guardian and potential crusader against communism was a powerful asset in favour of British sympathy for his regime." Gilbert, op. cit., p. 162

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[74] There is some controversy over this issue. A. Wolfers claims that the Locarno Accord contains "no guarantee of demilitarization as such." A. Wolfers, op. cit., p. 48. Jordan argues convincingly that "the intention in 1925 was to embody in the Treaty a firm guarantee of the demilitarized zone." Jordan, op. cit., p. 194. Support for the latter view comes from Newman, op. cit., p. 96

[75] A.J.P. Taylor, _The Origins of the Second World War_ (London: Penguin, 1964), p. 148.

> To allow Hitler's action to pass unchallenged was tantamount to confessing that France was no longer prepared to defend the elaborate security system that she had built up since 1918. This was a political fact which was to have major consequences in Central and Eastern Europe. [74]

Poland's already waning confidence in her French ally plummeted to a new low; Yugoslavia, which had moved hesitantly towards Germany under the late king's successor, Regent Prince Paul, began moving somewhat more boldly; and Belgium renounced her alliance with France to revert back to her pre-1914 neutrality. The loss of Belgium was especially unfortunate for France since she could no longer insist upon Belgium fortifying her short border with Germany as an essential supplement to the Maginot line. Austria, impressed with Germany's growing political strength and Italy's weak military performance in Abyssinia, signed an agreement with Germany on 11th July, 1936, in which she promised, amongst other things, "to maintain a foreign policy based always on the principle that Austria acknowledges herself to be a

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[74] Bullock, op. cit., p. 346. Namier draws attention to "a debility of purpose in the French...a paralysis of will which is difficult to explain in terms of reason." Namier, op. cit., p. 6.

German state."[77] Italy, troubled by evidence of German strength and alienated from the Western powers, quietly renounced her interest in Austria so as to build up political stock in Germany. The Rome-Berlin Axis was formally announced in November 1936. Two events, in addition to the League sanctions and the Rhineland occupation, brought this situation about. One was the Montreux Convention, the other the Spanish Civil War.

A major decision of the Montreux Convention, announced in July 1936, was to allow the unrestricted passage of Soviet war ships through the Dardanelles in peace time and, under certain easy conditions, in war time as well. French support in the matter had been of major importance in overcoming British objections.[78] Knowledge of the French role could only have increased Mussolini's discomfiture at the presence of a new, potentially hostile, force in the Mediterranean. Naval parity with France had always been a prime Italian concern and the Montreux decision was clearly to the former's advantage. No words, then, could have been more welcome to Mussolini than those intimating Hitler's recognition of the Mediterranean as a "purely Italian sea." "Italy," Mussolini was told by Hitler's emissary in September 1936, "has a right to positions of privilege and control in the Mediterranean. The interest of the Germans are turned towards the Baltic, which is their Mediterranean."[79]

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[77] Bullock, op. cit., p. 348.

[78] Barbara Ward, Italian Foreign Policy("Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs," No. 48; Oxford: Claredon Press, 1941), pp. 9-11.

Italy's Mediterranean fears seemed to be borne out when, barely a week after the conclusion of the Convention, the Soviet Union entered the Spanish Civil War on the side of the Republican forces. Those fears reinforced Mussolini's decision, taken independently of the Russian intervention, to throw in his lot with Franco in the hope of gaining leverage in the western Mediterranean against France. Hitler, too, had decided to support Franco, but more because of a desire to encourage differences between France and Italy. France had, at first, been inclined to favour the Republican forces with the supply of arms, but Britain, following what Medlicott has called "a hand-to-mouth policy,"[80] had restrained her by the promise of setting up a non-intervention committee of the interested major powers with the aim of prohibiting any assistance to the warring parties. The Non-Intervention Committee proved an exercise in futility, and assistance from Russia, Italy and Germany continued to flow on. Italo-German collaboration in the Spanish Civil War plus Hitler's recognition of the Italian interest in the Mediterranean, thus, persuaded Italy to identify herself closely with Germany, setting up the Rome-

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[79] Malcolm Muggeridge (ed.), Ciano's Diplomatic Papers (London: Oldhams, 1948), p. 43.
[80] Medlicott, op. cit., p. 150.

Berlin Axis in November 1936 and joining the Anti-Comintern pact (between Germany and Japan) a year later.[*1]

When Neville Chamberlain became the British Prime Minister in 1937, he felt that the situation could still be salvaged, that friendly relations with Italy could still be restored and Mussolini either drawn away from Hitler or at least converted into a force for peace. In this essentially 'promotive' vein, he sent a personal letter [*2] to Mussolini in July 1937, proposing immediate conversations aiming at a rapprochement. Mussolini's reply was positive. Conversations might have begun then but for an unfortunate spate of submarine attacks on British shipping in the Mediterranean. It was not until February 1938 that the idea could be revived. Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, informed Chamberlain that if the conversations were not begun immediately, they might never take place because of the Austrian situation. Chamberlain welcomed this opportunity,[*3] but Eden, his Foreign Secretary, felt strongly that conversations would be futile until Mussolini gave practical evidence of his good intentions by withdrawing Italian "volunteers" from Spain. Chamberlain thought this was not time for conditions, whereupon Eden resigned. The Italian terms - recognition of the Abyssinian conquest and of the Italian interest in the Mediterranean - were agreed to and conversations duly began. But the hour was late, and though an agreement was eventually reached, the German invasion of Austria in the meantime robbed the British of the pay-offs for which they had hoped.

[*1] A.J.P. Taylor, in discussing the genesis of the Pact, claims that both Germany and Japan wanted to set each other up against Russia so as to reap political harvest in China. Taylor, op. cit., p. 145. . The entry of Italy certainly tilted the Pact in the direction of Europe.

[*2] According to Pratt, the effusive tone of the letter owed its origin to Horace Wilson, the Prime Minister's close advisor.

[*3] Pressure in this direction from Hankey, the Cabinet Secretary, may have reinforced Chamberlain's strong pro-Italian inclinations. Pratt, op. cit., p. 103.

Chamberlain's peace offensive had not concentrated on Italy alone. Whether he obtained pay-offs for his Italian initiative or not, he had felt that Hitler should be approached independently as well. Consequently he had, in November 1937, sent the amiable Halifax, then Lord President of the Council, to inform the Nazi leader that the British government, while acknowledging the notion of revisionism, wished that revisions with respect to Austria, Czechoslovakia and Danzig be carried out peacefully. Hitler, however, had found the idea of peaceful revision to be an unreal one. Halifax had come away with the impression that, in view of Hitler's determination and British powerlessness in East Europe, he would get what he wanted. [84]

But what exactly was it that he wanted? His speech to the Reichstag on 20th February, 1938 did not contain any specific demands. The relevant sentences read as follows:

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[84] Earl of Halifax, The Fulness of Days (London: Collins, 1957), pp. 184-90.

> (a) "Over ten million Germans live in two of the states adjoining our frontiers... the fact that they are now citizens of other states should not deprive them of their rights as members of a national community.
> (b) Protection had to be extended to "those fellow Germans who live beyond our frontiers and are unable to assure for themselves the right to a general freedom, personal, political and ideological." [85]

This was the point that Chamberlain felt should be attacked. Whatever Hitler's aims in East Europe, Britain must work to influence them in the direction of moderation. He felt that this could be done by offering him sufficiently attractive concessions. It was in this, more than in the assessment of his aims, that Chamberlain misjudged Hitler.

Keeping in mind the definitions of policy types that we have given in the first chapter, we may now summarize the results of our analysis in Table 4 (overleaf):

The situation at the beginning of 1938 may be described as follows: one bloc revolved around Germany. Italy was her nearest ally, Austria was her satellite, and Yugoslavia and Hungary, erstwhile mutual enemies, were now essentially pro-German. France still remained the centre-pin, but it was the other powers who held her up. Britain had a restricted Pact

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[85] Radomir Luza, The Transfer of the Sudeten Germans : A Study of Czech-German Relations, 1933-1962(New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 111.

TABLE 4

PERIOD	EUROPEAN SYSTEMIC STRUCTURE	POLICY ORIENTATION / ROLE			
		FRANCE	GERMANY	BRITAIN	ITALY
1919-1925	Unifocal	intransigent	acquiescent	intransigent	preservative
1925-1932	Multifocal	promotive	promotive	promotive	promotive
1933-1938	Bifocal	preservative	intransigent	preservative	intransigent

with her, the result of the Rhineland occupation. The pact of Mutual Assistance was still operative between France and Russia though in a somewhat limp form. Czechoslovakia was still her faithful, albeit apprehensive, ally. Her alliance with Poland still existed, though like a grotesque statue, empty of life. Her alliance with Belgium had not been totally scrapped in 1936, merely transformed into a one-way guarantee of Belgium neutrality. It was on this essentially explosive stage that the drama over the Sudeten Issue was soon to begin.

SECTION II

THE STRUCTURAL ASPECTS OF THE SUDETEN ISSUE

A selective examination of the domestic and international dimensions of the Sudeten Issue forms the crux of this section. We shall firstly analyse the various domestic forces at play in relations between the Czechs and the Sudetens during the inter- war years. Then, since our basic interest is the British role in the matter, we shall discuss the nature of the British involvement in the period prior to March, 1938.

Czech-Sudeten Relations: The Inter-Play of Domestic Themes

The Sudeten Issue can best be understood as a complex inter-weaving of two sets of themes: Sudeten irredentism versus Sudeten pragmatism, and the Czech democratic tradition versus the Czech historical insecurity. Environmental circumstances highlighted the play of one theme rather than the other by either encouraging a particular theme or suppressing another.

Three main periods can be discerned in the development of the Issue; the first period commencing with the end of World War I, the second with the clear trend towards moderation following the national election in 1925, and the third with the founding of the Sudeten Party in 1933. The coincidence between these periods and the three temporal periods of the larger European system is interesting.

Nevertheless, an explanation of these periods, framed solely in terms of the influence of the larger system, can at best only be partial. A complete explanation would have to take into account the peculiarly domestic forces that shaped the Czechoslovak system. One is better off perhaps to think of the Czechoslovak system as a miniscule European system. The only variable missing appeared to be a conciliator like Britain. Perhaps, it was natural for her to be pushed into filling this gap when the time came in 1938.

PERIOD I (1918-1924)

The first period saw the duel between Sudeten irredentism and Czech historical insecurity expressed in an unwillingness to compromise in principle ultimately resulted in a slow defeat for the former. Pragmatism slowly cut into irredentism and with the gradual recognition that the circumstances were too strong for them, the Sudeten Germans groped for, and moved hesitatingly towards, co-operation with the Czechs.

Sudeten irredentism had an ideological base and a psychological impetus. During their long period of dominance in Bohemia, the Sudeten Germans had come to regard the Czechs as naturally inferior, unworthy of equal rights and subjects in need of the civilizing influence of German culture.[86] So ingrained was this belief that not even defeat in war could shake it. By the same token, it made it difficult for them to come to terms with the new order, to accept that their erstwhile servant was now their master. The Czech propensity for compromise was traceable to their consistent efforts to alleviate the consequences of their earlier pronounced subject status through democratic means.[87] Yet the ever present knowledge that the Germans had almost wiped them out as a nation bred in them a sense of historical insecurity that left them over-zealous with respect to their newly found independence.

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[86] Ibid., p. 26.

Thus it was that when the war ended, the Sudeten Germans, traditionally authoritarian, began vociferously proclaiming their new-found faith in self-determination. There was, however, no unanimity over the end state to be achieved. Some wanted to join Austria, others wanted to join Germany and many wanted to work for a greater Germany that included Austria as well. Very few wanted to be in Czechoslovakia.[88] In the emotionalism of the hour, few Sudeten Germans gave thought to their vested economic interests in the new state. Intercinine rivalries were forgotten as the clamour for self-determination spread.[89]

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[87] Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans:A Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 28-30.

[88] J.W. Bruegel, *Czechoslovakia Before Munich : The German Minority Problm and British Appeasement Policy*(London: Cambridge University, 1973), p. 31.

[89] F. Gregory Campbell, *Confrontation in Central Europe*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 154.

The Czechs would have no truck with what, to them, was a blatantly outrageous demand. At the same time, however, they did not turn on their ex-rulers. Perhaps they realized the impossibility of suppressing them or perhaps, they thought that in time the passions would die out. But if they did not take strong action to crush the Sudeten demand, they did not go out of their way to be friendly.

Thus, a tense action-interaction sequence developed between the two actors. The Czechs formed a Provisional State Assembly in October 1918; the Sudeten deputies decided to boycott it. They set up instead the "Austrian" states of "German Bohemia and Sudetenland." The Czechs sent their troops in. Both sides proclaimed their desire for negotiations, but the basis for negotiations did not exist. The Czechs wanted acceptance of the principle that the Germans of Bohemia and Moravia would form part of Czechoslovakia, but the Germans were equally adamant that this should not be the case. Not surprisingly, the Czechs excluded the Sudeten Germans from the constitutional deliberations that followed the recognition, by the signatories of the St. Germain Treaty, of Czechoslovakia as an international entity. The Sudeten Germans, on their part, expressed no great desire to participate in the making of the constitution for a state they refused to recognize. They made but one feeble attempt to secure entry in the Constituent Assembly and, not suprisingly, found the doors closed to them. While popular feeling cried out against negotiations with the "rebels,"[90] the government itself feared, with some basis, that the role of the Germans would be nothing but obstructionist.[91] The Constitution, when passed, did provide, however, for an essentially fair-minded treatment of the German minority. This was perhaps more due to the commitments made at Versailles than because of the Czech democratic tradition.[92] Even the humanist Masaryk, the first President of the Republic, referred to the Germans as "immigrants and colonists,"[93] a remark he apologized for at a later date. Almost two years after the Armistice, the Sudeten Leaders, though participating in the national elections, were still questioning the basis of the state, still attacking the Allied Powers for the supposed injustice meted to them. The predominant Sudeten sentiment was correctly expressed by Dr. Lodgman-Auen, while speaking on behalf of the Sudeten deputies in the National Assembly:

> We shall never recognize the Czechs as masters. We proclaim with solemnity that we shall never cease in our demands for the self-determination of our people. We do not regard ourselves bound by the laws passed by the Revolutionary National Council.[94]

Dr. Lodgman-Auen made this statement in June 1920. Over two years later, the sentiment was apparently still as strong. "He who does not think," cried Lodgman stridently, "that the supreme duty of a German deputy is to commit high treason in this state, makes a mistake." [95]

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[90] Ibid., p. 30.

[91] Ibid., p. 56.

[92] J.W. Bruegel, "The Germans in Czechoslovakia," *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic 1918-1948*, ed. Victor S. Mamatey and Radomir Luza (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), p. 172.

[93] Cited in Bruegel, *Czechoslovakia Before Munich* , p. 19.

[94] Luza, op. cit., p. 37.

Confronted by this continued recalcitrance, the Czechs, as Robbins has commented, "were disinclined to compromise for fear of being accused of weakness." [96] Having given form to a consitution, they were reluctant to give it spirit. Enthusiasm could hardly be shown in implementing the minority programme when the minority concerned showed the negative attitude of the Sudeten Germans. In some other areas, the government was understandably, though unfortunately, vindictive. [97] It steadily reduced the German component of its bureaucratic structure, in what it believed to be the national interest and linguistic balance. Further, and more important, it expropriated and distributed most of the landed estates of the German aristocracy, heavily favouring the Czech tenants in the process. Moreover, it encouraged resettlement of Czech families near the border so as to enhance the Czech presence in this sensitive area. One cannot say to what extent these measures were inspired by factors other than ethnic. But the ethnic factor certainly played a major role in their implementation, leaving a residue of resentment behind. Consideration for German feelings was, during this time, not high on the list of Czech concerns.

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[95] F. Koegler, Oppressed Minority(New York: Hutchinson, 1943), p. 21.
[96] Keith Robbins, Munich 1938(London: Cassell, 1968), p. 74.
[97] Hans Richter, No Oppression for the Sudeten Germans? (Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumuller, 1937).

The Sudeten Germans, nevertheless, were slowly beginning to realize that a complete boycott of the political life of the nation was impracticable. Their participation, even though under protest, in the national elections of 1920 was early evidence of this line of thinking. In the years that followed, they observed in their day-to-day activities the formality, if not the spirit, of the democratic process. The self-interest that underlay the pragmatic argument could not but be reinforced by other factors. It could not have escaped the notice of a few of their elite that the Czechs could have been really vindictive had they wanted to, if not in the enunciation, then in the implementation of the minority programme. They could also not have failed to note that, during the Ruhr Crisis, Czechoslovak sentiment had not supported the French action and had rather been directed towards moderation.[98] Finally, they must have also sensed the increasing disenchantment of the Sudeten masses with the nationalists, who promised little and delivered even less. Pragmatic considerations, then, persuaded the Sudeten Germans to grope their way back to a normality in relations with the Czechoslovaks. It was only in 1925 that they openly committed themselves to the so-called Activist path.

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[98] Campbell, op. cit., pp. 117-133.

PERIOD II (1925-1932)

If the first period was marked by feelings of insecurity on the Czech side and pronounced propensity for irredentism on the Sudeten side, the second period saw a greater play of the democratic tradition by the Czechs and an equally welcome manifestation of pragmatism by the Sudeten Germans. "The policy of activism," observes Radomir Luza "was predicated on the belief that the economic welfare of the Germans called for more than sitting back and committing the Czechs to run the show."[99] If societal values were to be authoritatively allocated, then a more equitable distribution could only be assured by participation in, rather than the denial of, the legitimate allocation process.

This rational line of thinking, that ideology had long blurred, was given a vote of approval by the Sudeten electorate in the 1925 elections. Of the three main Activist Parties, two joined the Central Government shortly thereafter and the third followed somewhat later on.[100] If the Sudeten Germans took a step towards co-operation, the Czechs themselves must be commended for keeping the door open. The Sudeten representation in the Czechoslovak Cabinet, in fact, was unique amongst the minorities of Europe. Not unexpectedly, cooperation between the two groups was not smooth at the beginning. With time, progress was made in the spheres of cultural autonomy and local government. More important though, than specific acts was the experience of working together. It was this experience that led the German Agrarian Spina to say in December 1926

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[99] Luza, op. cit., p. 39

[100] The three parties were : the German Agrarian Party with 24 seats; the Christian Socialist Party with 13 seats and the Social Democrat Party (the last to join the coalition) with 17 seats. The 1929 elections saw them maintain their ascendant position, with roughly the same division of seats amongst them. E. Taborsky, Czechoslovak Democracy at Work (London: Allen and Unwin, 1945), p. 85.

> We have lived with the Czechs for a 1000 years, and through economic, social, cultural and even racial ties, we are so closely connected with them that we really form one people... we live with the Czechs in a form of symbiosis... we have entered into a marriage of convenience with them and nothing can separate us. [101]

There was an element of exaggeration in this - racial differences had always prevented the two from becoming one people - but Spina was expressing the mood of his times. The Czech leaders chose to correspond in kind. President Masaryk thought the circumstances sufficiently altered to give his approval to the once dreaded word "autonomy." "I see," he said in 1928, "no fundamental antithesis to the concept of the central state in the desire for regional autonomy." [102] In the same year, Benes, then the Foreign Minister, declared,

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[101] Franz Spina in Le Matin (Paris), 26 December, 1926. Quoted in Bruegel, Czechoslovakia Before Munichop. cit., p. 79.

[102] Masaryk in Prager Tageblatt 30 October, 1928. Quoted in Bruegel, op. cit., p. 80.

> We have progressed so far that a final settlement of the minority question can no longer affect the basis of the national revolution. The question of the minorities will cease to be a political problem and become merely one of administration.[103]

The situation that Benes envisaged could probably have been realised but for circumstances that no Czechoslovak government could have controlled and certainly could not have foreseen. One was the Depression, the other was Hitler's rise to power in Germany.

PERIOD III (1933-1938)

Sudeten disenchantment with Activist philosophy was given a vehicle of expression in 1933 through the founding by Henlein of the Sudeten German Party. The third period, which can properly be said to have started with this event, was marked by the renewed spectre of a German irredentism confronting a growing, if somewhat insecure, Czechoslovak emphasis on state integrity.

If economic reasons decided the Sudeten Germans on a policy of activism, they also prompted the march away from it. There is no doubt that the Depression hit the Sudeten areas harder than the other areas of the country. This was natural because of the predominance there of the export-oriented glass and textile industries and their greater susceptibility to fluctuations in the world demand.

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[103] Benes in *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin), 21 October, 1929. Quoted in Bruegel, loc. cit.

Consequently, unemployment was higher and living conditions more difficult in the Sudeten areas then in remainder of Czechoslovakia. The Prague government unfortunately, under the influence of traditional economic theory, took piecemeal measures to alleviate a situation that demanded long-range planning, a sort of New Deal for the Sudeten Germans. The latter, in turn, saw in what governmental action there was, not the constraints of economic theory, but the operation of an imperfect justice.[104]

In this atmosphere of growing discontent, the Sudeten National Socialist Party, founded in 1918, started gaining ground. The Nazi emphasis on strength and military training, taken in the context of a blatantly irredentist program, constituted a danger that no Czechoslovak Government could ignore. In October, 1933 it outlawed the Nazi organization along with another organization with a radical outlook, the German National Party. They were, however, nonplussed and somewhat immobilised by Henlein's organization, founded in the same month. Not only did Henlein publicly disavow the Nazis and protest his loyalty to the democratic order, he made seemingly earnest efforts to come to terms with the Activists and to get the support of Czech right-wing parties. The Czechoslovak confusion was most clearly seen in the pre-1935 election period when the Cabinet, by a small margin, decided to debar Henlein from the elections, only to be overruled by President Masaryk, who felt that the available evidence did not convict Henlein.[105]

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[104] Luza, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

Henlein was the very epitcme of Sudeten pragmatism. The Sudeten Nazi leaders had undoubtedly planted in his mind the idea of a new national movement,[106] but he was not prepared to allow them to influence its development and possibly lead it to a premature end. He appreciated only too well the suspiciousness of the Czech authorities. An open irredentism was a luxury he could not afford. If he entertained irredentist thoughts himself, he certainly did not give them public utterance. It is possible that at this stage, however, he experienced no more than a vague desire for some form of territorial autonomy. His whole attention was focused on building up his fledgling movement, in mobilizing the nationalist sentiment. The substantial financial support that he got from the Reich was at this stage given without any strings attached.[107]

Henlein's approach was successful. The Czechoslovak government watched bemusedly as the movement grew rapidly in strength and finally won a shatteringly decisive victory in the 1935 election. The Activist parliamentary strength was cut down by almost two thirds and Henlein's followers who had entered the elections without a seat in parliament, obtained 44 of the 66 seats allotted to the Sudeten Germans.[108] The results were to have important repercussions on the political system. In the period that followed, Henlein was to grow more truculent, the Czechs more defensive. Their democratic tradition had caused political respectibility to be given to a movement that was potentially disruptive. They refused to grant it added respectability by allowing Henlein to sit in the central Cabinet, even though he had indicated his readiness to do so. Unable to ban the Party because of its enormous success at the polls, the Prague Government tried to combat its now growing sense of insecurity by initiating two different, but complementary, policies. One was directed at the European system. It led, in 1935, to a Soviet guarantee of Czechoslovakia, conditioned upon the French one.[109] It expressed itself in a willingness to consider, but only on terms that Hitler found unattractive, the 1936 German plan for a non-aggression pact between the two states.[110] It led to deliberate attempts to cultivate Western, especially British, public opinion.[111] Unfortunately, it did not have as much success in this respect as did Henlein.

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[105] Ronald Smelser, The Sudeten Problem, 1933-1938 (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1975), pp. 101-103.
[106] Emil Franzel, Sudetendeutsche Geschichte (Augsburg: Adam Kraft, 1958), pp. 365-66.
[107] Smelser, op. cit., pp. 114-15.

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[108] Taborsky, loc. cit.

[109] In explaining this arrangement, Wandycz states that it not only satisfied Benes's image of his country as essentially Western but also appealed to his partiality for multilateral, as opposed to bilateral, security arrangements. Benes, he writes, saw in it "a substitute for the tripartite treaty that Laval had been unwilling to accept." Piotr S. Wandycz, "The Foreign Policy of Edvard Benes," in Mamatey and Luza, op. cit., pp. 228-30.

The other policy was inner-directed. It sought to cut Henlein's support amongst the Sudeten masses through increased cooperation with the Activist Parties, but its most noticeable venture in this respect - the February agreement of 1937 - foundered because of growing chauvinism in the Czech public and amongst the Czech civil servants.[112] With the lamentable ineffectiveness of their various initiatives, their sense of historical uncertainty started reasserting itself strongly.

The rapid process of radicalization in the Sudeten German Party reflected the Activist allegation that the party had received a mandate for irredentism.[113] Emboldened by success, both directly at home and vicariously abroad, the ex-Nazis and other radicals, who formed the backbone of Henlein's movement, increasingly clamoured for aggressive programmatic declarations. In this, they met with increasing support from radical circles in the Reich. Henlein, still the soul of pragmatism, was inclined to view these demands as somewhat premature. But if he had earlier epitomized his movement, his movement no longer epitomized his thinking. If at one time, he had given it direction, it now forced him to hurry militantly along. In 1936, he began emphasizing the Sudeten German's cultural identity with Germany. "I would rather be hated with Germany," he declared in June 1936, "than gain advantage from hatred of Germany." [114] In April 1937, he made a thinly disguised pitch for territorial autonomy. In his well-known "Six Bills" speech to the National Assembly, he asked that all citizens be listed according to their nationality, separately and non-transferably, and that each nationality look after its members as best it could. [115] Finally, on November 19, 1937, Henlein wrote secretly to Hitler, recommending the time as ripe for Anschluss and offering his services in working for it. He and his Party, he informed the Fuehrer, desired, "nothing more ardently than the incorporation of Sudeten

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[110] After formal explorations of the German attitude only produced reaffirmations of the 1925 German-Czech Arbitration Treaty, informal contacts were established with two Nazi Party officials, Haushofer and Trautmansdorff. However, Hitler's insistence on Czechoslovak neutrality as the price for a non-aggression pact torpedoed the secret negotiations. cf. Gerhard L. Weinberg, "Secret Hitler-Benes Negotiations in 1936-1937," Journal of Central European Affairs, Vol. 19 (1960), pp. 366-74.

[111] In this respect, the efforts of Jan Masaryk, the son of Thomas Masaryk and the Czechoslovak Minister to the Court of St. James, were particularly noticeable. We may also mention the meeting in May, 1937 of the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, Milan Hodza, with Neville Chamberlain. For the latter, see Keith Feiling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain(London: MacMillan, 1946), p. 302.

[112] Luza, op. cit., p. 96 and p. 102.

[113] Smelser, op. cit., p. 121.

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[114] Ibid., p. 162.

[115] C.A. Macartney, "The Danubian Countries: Czechoslovakia and her German Minority," Survey of International Affairs, ed. A. Toynbee (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 451-53.

German territory, nay of the whole Bohemian, Moravian, and Silesian area within the Reich."[116] In explaining this pivotal declaration of intent, Ronald Smelser has written, "if it was dawning on Henlein that an eventual radical solution to the Sudeten Problem was likely, than he had to offer Hitler something radical if he was going to survive politically."[117] Indeed, self-preservation dictated this ultimate solution. Left to himself Henlein might have demanded nothing more than some form of territorial autonomy; under radical pressure he was left with no other choice than to ask for an Anschluss. By the end of 1937, Sudeten German irredentism had almost shed its pragmatic character. At roughly the same time, a gradually returning sense of historical insecurity had begun making the Czechs more obdurate.[118] The Austrian Anschluss of March 1938 was the signal for one to launch an unsparing and sustained attack upon the other.

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[116] Henlein to Neurath, 19 November, 1937. Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1937-1945, Series D, II, 49-62.

[117] Smelser, op. cit., p. 206.

[118] The seventeenth century replacement of the Czech aristocracy by the German aristocracy as the dominant power in Bohemia as well as the large influx of German settlers had resulted in a prolonged onslaught against the Czechs in the linguistic, educational and cultural spheres. At times, it had appeared the nation's very existence was at stake. For example, the famous scholar Dobrovsky wrote in 1810, "Without the support of God, the fate of our nation is utterly desperate." Cited in Luza, op. cit. p. 25. In the last three centuries, the Czechs have, in fact, enjoyed very few years of real independence. A historically derived sense of security may therefore be said to mark the Czech national character.

BRITAIN AND THE SUDETEN ISSUE

Though Britain was a signatory of the treaty that recognized Czechoslovakia's statehood, the 1919 Treaty of St. Germain,[119] her interest in the Sudeten Issue might be said to have commenced in 1936. In no small measure, this was due to the efforts of the Sudeten Party and the Czechoslovak Government to court the British elite. As Weinberg has stated, the Czechoslovak Government was anxious to convince the British that the Sudeten Problem existed only because of Germany and the Sudeten Party was out to prove that the Sudeten grievances were the real issue. "The year 1936," continues Weinberg, "therefore saw the beginning of a race between these views of the Sudeten Question : a pretext for aggression or a grievance to be corrected."[120]

As if reflecting this competition, two basic approaches are discernible in British thinking in the period prior to March, 1938:

(1) The "internationalist" approach which basically saw the Sudeten Problem resolved as a consequence of the easing of international tensions, thus stressing the importance of

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[119] Czechoslovakia was, in fact, a functioning state even before the Peace Treaties. On October 28, 1918, she proclaimed her independence and on November 13, 1918, created a provisional assembly to formulate the new constitution. The Allied Powers at the Peace Conference that opened in Paris on 18 January, 1919 were, therefore, confronted by a _fait accompli_. See Victor S. Mamatey, "The Establishment of the Republic," _A History of the Czechoslovak Republic_, op. cit.

[120] Weinberg, _Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany_, op. cit., p. 313-14.

contacts, and a possible agreement with, Hitler's Germany.

(2) The "domestic" approach which stressed the domestic dimensions of the problem and saw it resolved essentially at that level. That such a solution could lead to an easing of international tensions was not discounted. But the impetus for the solution had to come from within the Czechoslovak political system.

Three stages might be discerned in the development of British thinking in the matter. The first stage might be said to start with Henlein's second visit to London (July, 1936); the second with Foreign Secretary Eden's instructions to Newton, the British Minister in Prague, in March 1937; and the third with Halifax's visit to Germany in November 1937.

In the first stage, the problem was seen as essentially a Czech-German problem rather than as a purely Sudeten one. The basic question asked was whether Britain should press Czechoslovakia to sign an agreement with Germany, leading almost automatically to the resolution of her internal difficulties. One view stressed that Britain's friendship with Germany was more important than a possible provocative interest in East Europe; that Britain, in any case, had no power to impose her will on Germany; and that, therefore, both because of goal priorities and means availability, Britain should press Czechoslovakia to come to an agreement with Germany on the latter's terms; another view held that friendship with Germany was an ephemeral goal and an interest in central Europe justifiable on moral and pragmatic grounds; that Britain still possessed the power to bring about an equitable settlement; and that, therefore, Czechoslovakia should press to an agreement with Germany only if equitable terms were offered. Both schools, then, favoured pressure on the Czechs calculated to effect a Czech-German agreement, but differed widely on its terms of reference. One thought these terms irrelevant to the larger goal of European peace; the other thought the larger goal meaningless if equitable terms could not be agreed to.[121]

On the matter of equity, a Foreign Office memorandum of January 1937 had declared equity to signify

> measures by Germany, in treaty form or otherwise, which would satisfy the governments of East Europe with regard to Germany's intention to respect the territorial integrity and sovereign independence of all East European states.[122]

The occasion for the memorandum had been a suggestion of the Reich Economic Minister, Hjalmar Schacht, in the autumn of 1936 that secret conversations be commenced between Britain, France and Germany with the aim of arriving at a comprehensive settlement covering, on the one hand, certain economic and financial concessions to Germany, the most important of which related to the transfer of colonies and on the other hand, the acceptance by Germany of the Western powers' political desiderata. Such a view of equity would in any case, have been unacceptable to the Germans. From her own side Britain hesitated to ask Germany to indicate the extent of her demands. Though Schacht's peace initiative failed, Britain was reluctant to press for a separate agreement in regard to Czechoslovakia, simply because she could not decide what a mutually acceptable basis for agreement could be. Unable to abandon the notion of equity, and unwilling to bring pressure on Germany the British government began to stress the domestic nature of the Sudeten Problem. Equity at the domestic level had a different context than at the international level. More reluctant to pronounce upon it, the British nevertheless urged the Czechoslovak government to compose its differences with the Sudeten German party. One might as well have told a drowning man that his best bet was to swim with the current.

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[121] The two diametrically opposed schools are shown here. A third, intermediate, school took a mellower view of Germany but insisted on Britain taking a continuing interest in East Europe on the assumption that an absence of interest would prove more provocative for Hitler than a show of interest. This school, too, supported the 'equity' thesis.
[122] Foreign Office Memorandum, 25 January, 1937. F.P.(36)43. C 484/42/18 (21654).

The second stage may be said to begin with this switch in emphasis. So intent was Foreign Secretary Eden on stressing the domestic nature of the problem that he was not prepared to portray it to the Czechs as a first step towards a Czech-German agreement, even though this was his private conviction. Thus he exhorted Newton, the British Minister in Prague,

> to urge upon the Czechoslovak Government the importance of a far-reaching settlement, not so much on the grounds that such a settlement would make an agreement with Germany possible (a point on which His Majesty's Government are not in a position to speak with authority), but because it would fortify Czechoslovakia's reputation in the

> eyes of the world for humane and generous treatment of her minorities in accordance with her treaty obligations.[123]

A few months were to pass before the British Foreign Secretary decided that the worsening situation made it unavoidable to ask the Czechs to make the "necessary" concessions, not on vague moral grounds but in the interest of avoiding military intervention by Germany and thus giving European peace another chance.[124]

One doubts whether it would have made any material difference had Eden emphasized these grounds to the Czechoslovak Government at an earlier date. The sense of insecurity was too great, their suspicions of the Sudeten Germans too strong for them to have done anything in the matter; the Sudeten German leadership, in turn, having come under direction of the SS, could not turn back from an increasingly manifest radical course.[125] As the situation worsened, the Czechs were the ones who came to bear the brunt of the British wrath. Benes was seen as "the chief nigger in the wood-pile," playing with the problem for electoral reasons.[126] "The Czechs are mad to behave like this," wrote an irate Vansittart "They are asking for trouble and will eventually get it, if they go on."[127] It does seem to me," agreed Cadogan, "that the Czechs and Dr. Benes in particular, if our information is correct, have throughout mishandled this situation, to the extent of making it dangerous not only for themselves, but for Europe as a whole."[128] Unwilling, however, to take a more active role in the Sudeten Issue, the British government did nothing but repeat generalities to the Czechs. They made some attempts to mount pressure on the Czechoslovak government by influencing the British press in an anti-Czech and pro-Sudeten direction, but these attempts were too feeble to affect the situation.[129] British irritation with the Czechs was perhaps a reflection of an anxiety compounded by immobility. At the same time, however, they believed (or forced themselves to believe) that a solution could be generated by forces within the Czechoslovak political system. Henlein, who from 1935 onwards had visited London annually, had carefully fostered the image of a moderate leader, fighting hard, but fighting fair, against time and inexplicable Czech obduracy, for a better deal for his people. It had not occurrred to the British that considerations of self preservation could weigh more with Henlein than concern for a genuine settlement. It certainly does not appear that they knew of the increasing SS participation in the matter.

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[123] Eden to Newton, Tel. No. 71, 12 March, 937. R 1421/188/12.

[124] Eden to Newton, Tel. No. 36, 6 November, 937. R 7376/188/12 (21131).

[125] According to Smelser, the SS involvement in the matter began in 1936 with the appointment by Himmler of an SS officer, Lorenz, as head of the VOMI (Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle), the crucial Reich organ for ethnic German affairs. Smelser, op. cit., p. 188. The last three chapters in Smelser's book deal with the SS role in the Sudeten Problem.

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[126] Minute by O' Malley, 25 October, 1937. R 7107/138/12 (21131).
[127] Minute by Vansittart, 18 March, 1937. R 1302 /32/12 (20373).
[128] Minute by Cadogan, 26 October, 1937. R 7107/188/12 (21131).
[129] See, for example, Foreign Office Minutes, 24 June, 1937, R 3417/32/12 (20374).

With Halifax's visit to Hitler in November, 1937 the British again began thinking from the "internationalist" viewpoint. This visit was part of the so-called "peace offensive" and was tied with Chamberlain's belief that a 'promotive' role in European affairs was appropriate at the time. We have already stated how Chamberlain viewed the results of this visit. We shall mention here only how a senior foreign Office official saw the matter. "Hitler," observed the Assistant Under-Secretary, Sir Orme Sargent,

> gave Halifax no indication that he is prepared to give anything in return for the colonies, except German goodwill..he was not prepared, as a quid pro quo, to discuss with us, still less give us, any undertakings with regard to German policy of expansion in East Europe.[130]

Nevertheless, it appears proper to mention, Sargent felt that "it will be very difficult, not to say dangerous, not to follow it with proposals on our part."[131] Chamberlain thought a British initiative necessary because he presumed that Hitler's demands could be scaled down. The important thing is that at this stage, both the political and the bureaucratic elite thought in terms of a 'promotive' role for Britain.

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[130] Minute by Sargent, 23 November, 1937. R 8161/270/18.
[131] Ibid.

The document prepared in February, 1938 as the basis for the expected Anglo-German conversations laid special stress on East Europe. Whereas disarmament (especially in the air), Germany's return to the League, and a resurrection of Locarno, all necessary for an increased sense of international security, would be "self-balancing," the one concrete bargain worth striving for would revolve around assurances from Germany regarding East Europe against colonial concessions from Britain. Germany would be asked to conclude an agreement with Czechoslovakia analogous to the agreement she had made with Austria in 1936, with the proviso that changes in the status quo be made peacefully. "We should make it clear," ran the Memorandum, "that we could not condone any changes in the international status of a country achieved by force against the will of its inhabitants or any forcible interference in her internal affairs." [132] The essence of the plan was manifest in Eden's cryptic remark, "If we do not get, we shall not give." [133] But if Britain now saw her role in the Sudeten Issue from the "internationalist" viewpoint, she did not abandon the "domestic" approach entirely. Whereas, she herself would help achieve a resolution of the matter directly through the expected Anglo-German Conversations, she felt that France should concentrate on the domestic aspects of the issue and influence her ally to moderate her stand.

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[132] Foreign Office Memorandum, 25 January, 1937. F.P.(36)43. C 484/42/18 (21654)

[133] Minute by Eden, November, 1937. R 8161/270/18.

To this end, conversations took place between Chamberlain and Eden, on the British side, and Premier Chautemps and Foreign Minister Delbos, on the French. [134] It was the first real clash between Britain's 'promotive' stance and France's 'preservative' outlook. Two themes were clearly discernible in the French perception of the situation: one, their fear that a settlement, if possible, of the Sudeten Issue would merely be a first step in Hitler's plan for expansion and two, their reluctance to press an "autonomy" solution upon the Czechoslovak government, a step they felt would make its position more untenable. On both counts, the British sought to reassure the French. As for Hitler's presumed plans for territorial expansion, Chamberlain said that British policy "ought to make this more difficult or even to postpone it until it might became unrealizable." Britain, he said, had no intention of giving Hitler a free hand in Czechoslovakia. As for the second, he explained that initially he saw the French intervention in Prague only as a means of getting information on Czech intentions, rather than work towards a particular solution. This information, he claimed, would be useful in exercising a restraining influence upon Germany in any talks that Britain had with her.

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[134] Conversations with French Ministers, November 29 and 30, 1937. C 8234/270/18.

Ultimately, Delbos agreed to the British request, but he did not indicate the lines on which the French would make their representations. He certainly did not undertake to recommend, as perhaps the British would have liked him to, that the Czechoslovak Government invite Henlein to enter the central Cabinet. Britain's 'promotive' stand appeared to have won, but the victory was rather murky. Anglo-French differences on the Sudeten Issue were to be a major factor in the development of the situation in 1938. Whether the Anglo-German Conversations would have borne fruit, one will never know. The conversations probably would have failed because of Germany's increasing intransigence.

The British involvement in the Sudeten Issue thus varied with the perspective from which they approached it. When they thought that a solution was possible only through Germany, they were prepared to think in 'promotive' terms. When they felt that the key to the solution lay in the internal working of the Czechoslovak system, they preferred an essentially 'preservative' stand. When the Anschluss occurred in March 1938, they were hoping that their 'promotive' efforts would meet with some success.

CHAPTER III

THE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

It is a central contention of the dissertation that there are differences in the perspectives from which the bureaucratic and political elites approach an issue; that these differences express themselves in differing capacities for risk-taking and that this in turn means a difference in the policy-relevant outputs that emanate from the two levels.

We have already, in our initial chapter, pointed out what these differences are. Whether the political elite suffer from a greater built-in sense of security or whether they are inherently more tolerant of ambiguities in the environment, they appear to be sensitive to different kinds of factors than the bureaucratic elite. The political elite tend to be more concerned about the military, public opinion and threat level aspects of a situation than are the bureaucratic elite. The factors that apparently weigh more with the latter are those of international structure and issue salience that the political elite tend to play down. Being responsive to or keyed into, certain aspects of the situation, the perspective of the political elite is naturally different. Accordingly, for the political elite, the following schema is valid:

TABLE 5

```
                Independent      Intervening          Dependent
                 Variable         Variable             Variable

Military
Strength--------.
                |
Public          |
Opinion---------|                                      POLICY
                |---------> RISK-TAKING --------->
Political       |                                      OUTPUT
Stability-------|
                |
Environmental   |
Hostility ------'
```

We have hypothesised that the risk- taking propensity of the political elite will correspond with its perception of 1) military strength 2) public opinion 3) political stability 4) enviromental hostility. Our hypotheses hold that, other things being equal,

> 1) if military strength is perceived to be low, risk-taking will be low also and that if military strength is perceived to be high, risk-taking will be high.
>
> 2) if public opinion is held to be pacific, the propensity to take risks will be reduced but if public opinion is perceived to be aggressive, the risk-taking propensity will increase.
>
> 3) if the domestic political system is seen to be stable, risk-taking propensity will be lower than if it is perceived to be unstable.

As for environmental hostility, the <u>ceteris paribus</u> condition is not seen to hold. By itself, environmental hostility is not believed to have any firm link with the dependent variable. But in the presence of other variables, certain causal linkages are seen to be established. For example, where military strength is perceived to be low, high environmental hostility will lead to a dramatic dip in risk-taking, but would increase sharply if military strength is seen as high. The relationship is somewhat complex and one of our tasks in this chapter will be to unravel it.

Risk-taking, however, as our initial chapter made clear, is only an intervening variable. It has consequences for the policy outputs of the political elite. Where risk-taking propensity is high, pressure will be set in motion for a 'promotive' or 'intransigent' policy.

Four phases can be discerned in the policy-relevant behavior of the political elite, each dictated by a certain level in risk taking. During the first phase (March 1938), the risk-taking propensity of the political elite is seen to be low and a 'preservative' attitude was adopted towards the Sudeten Issue; during the second phase (April-May, 1938), a slow rise in risk-taking propensity is believed to have taken place, leading the political elite slowly along a 'promotive' path; the third phase (June-August, 1938) is marked by a steady decrease in the risk-taking propensity and the reluctance of the political elite to give Britain a clear lead in the matter (in effect, a return to the 'preservative' stance); and the fourth phase (September, 1938) marks a dramatic descent into the 'acquiescent' state that marked the prelude to Munich.

BASIC POLICY OUTLOOK : A Background Note

In trying to understand the perceptual basis of our independent variables, it is necessary to portray the overall situation as the political elite saw it in the period before March, 1938. We shall be drawing primarily on the four decision-makers who had the largest impact on foreign policy during the period. These four, who in September, 1938, comprised the well-known 'Inner Cabinet' were: Neville Chamberlain, The Prime Minister; Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary; Sir John Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and Sir Samuel Hoare, the Home Secretary. Of these, Chamberlain was the most important, not only by virtue of being the Prime Minister, but also because of the masterful hold he had over his Cabinet colleagues. Not unnaturally, therefore, whilst focusing on the Inner Cabinet, we shall focus a little more sharply on Chamberlain, its primary member.

One theme is clearly discernible in the ideological make-up of the political elite: its fervent belief that an accommodation could be reached both with Germany's Hitler and Italy's Mussolini. As Chamberlain wrote to an American relative,

> Dictators are too often regarded as though they were entirely inhuman. I believe this idea to be quite erroneous. It is indeed the human side of the dictators which makes them dangerous but on the other hand, it is the side on which they can be approached with the greatest hope of successful

issue.[1]

Thus Chamberlain believed in the value of negotiations and the essential possibility of a peaceful settlement of all disputes. What certainly reinforced this belief was his personal abhorrence of war; the latter he said, "wins nothing, cures nothing, ends nothing."[2] He thus proclaimed that there could be "no nobler ambition for an English statesman than to be said of him that he had made gentle the life of the world."[3] Of course, he did not rule out war in the defence of truly "vital" interests but it was apparent that war was an option the political elite would contemplate only with the greatest reluctance.

In any case, war with Germany was not regarded as inevitable. Hitler was not regarded as motivated by a lust for power, but by a concern for race. Germany was recognized to have certain justifiable grievances, a product of the Peace Treaties of 1919 and appeasement was a strategy calculated to meet these grievances. What appeasement meant primarily was the accession to Germany's outstanding demands in return for some binding assurances of European peace. It was in this spirit that Chamberlain wrote in 1936,

> I don't believe myself that we could purchase peace and a lasting settlement by handing over

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[1] Chamberlain letters, 16 January, 1938. Quoted by Keith Feiling, _The Life of Neville Chamberlain_, (London:MacMillan, 1946), p. 324.

[2] Quoted in Feiling, op. cit., p. 320.

[3] Speech at Birmingham, April, 1938. Feiling, op. cit., p. 321

> Tanganikya to the Germans, but if I did, I would not hesitate for a moment [4]

In November, 1937, he wrote,

> I don't see why we should not say to Germany "give us satisfactory assurances that you won't use force to deal with the Austrians and Czechoslovakia and we will give you similar assurances that we won't use force to prevent the changes you want if you can get them by peaceful means." [5]

Equity was hinted at in this statement, an equity that was accentuated by Chamberlain's occasionally expressed reluctance to give Germany concessions which would "involve humiliations and disadvantages and shame us in the eyes of the world." [6] At times, however, it appeared that the political elite was prepared to offer Hitler concessions without getting anything in return but expressions of goodwill. At these times, the political elite appeared to be tilting towards an indiscrimate, rather than judicious, revision of the Versailles Treaty.

This trend seemed to be especially prominent as far as Eastern Europe was concerned. Simon was of the view that Britain should not attempt to control German expansionism in the East. Halifax had nothing against Germany establishing a sphere of influence in that area and in fact, believed that Britain should do whatever was in her power to meet Hitler's

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[4] Chamberlain letters, 13 April, 1936. Middlemas, op. cit., p. 53.
[5] Diary, 27 November, 1937. Feiling, op. cit., p. 333.
[6] Quoted in Pratt, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

'legitimate' demands there. [7] As for Chamberlain, he was prepared to let Germany dominate Eastern Europe, if done peacefully, believing "they want the same things for the Sudeten Deutsche as we did for the Uitlanders in the Transvaal." [8] Hoare believed that the Sudeten areas had been erroneously included in Czechoslovakia when that state was constituted after World War I. [9] There was thus a broad consensus amongst these crucial decision-makers that Hitler could do what he liked in Eastern Europe, as long as he went about it peacefully. They preferred to ignore the question of what they would do in case he decided to use force. They wanted to believe, of course, that this eventuality would not arise. But they had to admit that Hitler's future behavior could not be predicted with certainty. It was because of this that the French commitment to Eastern Europe was a source of great anxiety, expecially to Halifax. Far from wanting to give a British commitment in the area, he would have liked to have scrapped the French alliance system, believing it to be capable of one day dragging France, and Britain along with her, into war. [10]

Dictators were approachable, Chamberlain believed, but they were also frequently irrational and capable of mad-dog acts. They should therefore not be provoked.[11] In fact, Chamberlain admitted, this belief had been crucial in preventing him from recommending strong action against Germany during the Rhineland crisis in 1936.[12] If Chamberlain did not wish to provoke Hitler unnecessarily, Simon was reluctant to take a clear stand on an issue,[13] Hoare pressed consistently for a settlement with Germany[14] and Halifax felt his dominant functional goal to be "to compose, perhaps pacify, turn discord into harmony."[15] The fact was that the inner Cabinet was not comprised of what can be termed as "high risk-takers." Halifax's caution, for example, is attested to by Lord Birkenhead, his biographer and erstwhile personal secretary. "He," writes Birkenhead, "liked to test the ground like an elephant before venturing on it."[16] Halifax himself wrote that one of his cardinal rules, especially in times of tension, was "never jump onto a field unless you have a pretty good idea where you can jump out."[17]

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[7] Peter Cowling, The Impact of Hitler: British Politics and British Policy (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 340.

[8] Chamberlain Diary, 27 November, 1937. Feiling, op. cit., p. 333.

[9] Samuel Hoare (Lord Templewood), Nine Troubled Years (London: Victor Gollancz, 1954), p. 2.

[10] Halifax to Linlithgow, 24 April, 1936 and Halifax to Cecil, 23 December, 1937. Cowling, op. cit., p. 273.

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[11] Chamberlain noted that during the May, 1937 meeting with the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, Milan Hodza, the latter had specifically requested that Britain refrain from giving "provocation to Germany which might give her the pretext for an adventure." Feiling, op. cit., p. 302.

[12] Diary, 12 March, 1936. Feiling, op. cit., p. 279.

[13] Cowling, op. cit., p. 75.

[14] Hoare, op. cit., p. 256.

[15] Earl of Birkenhead, Halifax (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1965), p. 606.

[16] Ibid., p. 605.

[17] Earl of Halifax, Fulness of Days, (London: Collins, 1957), p. 196.

This cautious tendency was accentuated by the political elite's belief that Britain would have to "go it alone" in her dealings with Germany. France was unanimously seen as more a liability than an ally. Chamberlain complained that

> France's weakness is a public danger just when she should be a source of strength and confidence and as a friend, she has two faults which destroy half her value: she can never keep a secret for more than half an hour, nor a government for more than nine months.[18]

The powerful United States was regarded with complete scepticism. "It is always best and safest," wrote the Prime Minister," to count on nothing from Americans but words."[19] Russia was willing to offer her friendship, but her intentions were suspect. Her main interest was seen rather "to fish in troubled waters"[20] than in the maintenance of peace. It was with an eye to this that Chamberlain uttered a sentiment that partly explains why the political elite was reluctant to be firm with Germany :

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[18] Chamberlain letters, 16 January, 1938. Feiling, op. cit., p. 323.

[19] Quoted in Feiling, op. cit., p. 325. In one of his letters, he even called the United States "a nation of cads." Chamberlain letters, 29 January, 1933. Middlemas, op. cit., p. 54. Disillusionment with the United States was probably the reason for Chamberlain's rejection of the January 1938 Roosevelt Plan for a world conference of democratic nations. Anglo-American relations, especially in the Pacific, had been hampered by an American isolationism that Chamberlain held to seriously out of tune with the world situation.

[20] Hoare, op. cit., p. 115. Anti-Communism was a key trait in the political elite. Nicholson relates how Chamberlain unconsciously slipped into describing the Russians as "our enemies" in a talk he was having with Maisky, the Russian Ambassador to Britain. Harold Nicholson, Diaries and Letters, (London: Collins, 1966). Feiling comments, "Communism was a plague with which he would have no contact." Feiling, op. cit., p. 300.

> In the absence of any powerful ally and until our armaments are completed, we must adjust our foreign policy to our circumstance and even bear with patience and good humour actions which we should like to treat in a very different fashion. [21]

To summarize, the following beliefs stand out in the policy base of Britain's political elite in 1938.

1) An accommodation could be reached with a basically rational Hitler.
2) In view of Hitler's possibly limited ambitions, war with Germany need not be regarded as inevitable.
3) Within the framework of these limited ambitions, Hitler could possibly use force. He should, therefore, not be unduly provoked.
4) As far as possible, he could have a free hand in Eastern Europe.
5) War was a mutually destructive endeavour that solved nothing and in fact, resulted in undesirable revolutionary consequences.
6) Britain had neither the allies nor the arms to conduct a large-scale war. In any case, alliances could themselves lead to a war.

Having analyzed the basic policy outlook of the political elite, we now turn to an analysis of its foreign policy behavior in 1938 vis-a-vis the Sudeten Issue.

PHASE I (MARCH, 1938): THE PRESERVATIVE PHASE

Nature of Policy Orientation

The 'preservative' stance in foreign policy, in terms of the definition given in the first chapter, relates to an outlook that neither acquiesces in nor takes action against any forcible and unwelcome change in the international enviroment. It neither seeks to coerce other parties nor accommodate their wishes.

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[21] Chamberlain letters, 16 January, 1938. Feiling, op. cit., p. 324.

The immediate reaction of the political elite to Hitler's takeover of Austria was one of intense bitterness. In a meeting of the Cabinet convened on 12 March, 1938, the Prime Minister declared that he had no doubt that Hitler's action had been pre-meditated and was "a typical illustration of power politics." [22] Only force could have deterred Germany but Britain had been in no condition to supply this. It was ironical, commented Chamberlain, that the Austrian news had been broken to him at the very moment he had been informing the German Foreign Minister, then visiting London, of the importance he attached to a German contribution to "a peaceful attitude of mind in Europe." [23] The sheer fact was, and this the Prime Minister admitted, that the task of achieving stable European peace had been made "much more difficult." [24] The assessment of the British Ambassador in Berlin was even more frank. "All the work of the past eleven months," he ruefully observed, "has crashed to the ground." [25] It was an assessment with which hardly any of the important ministers disagreed.

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[22] Cabinet Conclusions, 12 March, 1938. Cabinet 12(38), CAB 23/93.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Henderson to Halifax, 16 March, 1938. H/15/15, F.O. 800/313.

The bureaucratic elite, as we will pcint out in the fourth chapter, had confronted the political elite with three alternative responses to the new situation in the European system. One was the Grand Alliance of anti-German powers. The second was a conditional commitment to France, the commitment applying only if Czechoslovakia undertook a generous and satisfactory programme to meet the Sudeten grievances. The third was not to do anything substantial. The bureaucratic elite had recommended the conditional commitment alternative because it had believed it important that Hitler be resisted and believed that the Sudeten Issue was an appropriate area for such resistance. The political elite however, more sensitive to the resource picture, even to the point of exaggerating British inadequacy in this respect, chose not to do anything substantial. Instead of giving a commitment, even conditional to France, it decided that

> We must remind France of what we had often told her in the past, namely that we were not prepared to add in any way to our existing commitments and that therefore she must not count on military assistance from us if she got embroiled with Germany over Czechoslovakia and that she would be well advised to exert her influence at Prague in favour of an accommodation being reached with Germany.[26]

This statement was wholly negative in tone. Not only did the political elite decline to opt for a scheme which might be objectively considered equitable, it even wondered whether some arrangement could not be reached "which might prove more acceptable to Germany."[27] Far from mobilising "all our friends and resources and going full out against Germany," the political elite was even prepared to suggest to Czechoslovakia "to make the best terms she could with Germany while there was yet time."[28] In other words, Czechoslovakia was to be abandoned if only France could make this possible.

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[26] Foreign Policy Committee Minutes, F.P. (36) 26th mtg., 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62.

The desire to wean France away from Czechoslovakia was an essentially negative, 'preservative' one. The Foreign Office had feared that should no fresh commitment of some sort be given to France, i.e. should the third alternative in its memorandum be accepted, France could very well come to a separate arrangement with Germany that Britain might rue. This the political elite refused to accept. Halifax, in fact, expressed his conviction that "in the long run, if France had to decide between friendship with us and making the best terms which she could with Germany, she would chose the former."[29] Still, in accepting the "do nothing" alternative, the political elite realized that some reassurance would have to be given to France lest Anglo-French relations deteriorate. If France had to be weaned away from Czechoslovakia, relations with her could not be allowed to sour. As the Prime Minister himself put it, he did not wish "especially at the present juncture to risk offending France beyond what might be absolutely essential." [30] France, therefore, had to be reassured, but the reassurance could not be so specific as to amount to a fresh commitment. This, the Foreign Secretary feared, would be self-defeating as it would only make France more recalcitrant, making it more difficult for Britain to convince her to forget her obligations to Czechoslovakia. A reassurance, nevertheless, no matter how general, would hardly be compatible with any expression of partiality for German claims in Central Europe or with a public expression of the real feelings towards Czechoslovakia.

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

In practice, what this implied was that a necessary vagueness was introduced in the policy announced to the world. In a speech that Chamberlain made to the British Parliament on 24 March, 1938, Britain took no open stand on any aspect of the Sudeten Issue. [31] There was a fair degree of reassurance to the French, but not such as to alienate the Germans or embolden the Czechs. The Germans were informed that Britain would support some redress of their grievances, but not in terms that would commit her. The world, especially France and Germany, was to be left guessing as to what the British attitude in the matter would be. The British political elite persuaded itself that this fact, by itself, would have a restraining effect upon both France and Germany.

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 333, 24 March, 1938.

In expressing this hope, it was, of course, blatantly ignoring the considered opinion of the bureaucratic elite that the changed conditions no longer permitted deterrence to be exercised through 'guessing' games. In any case, it certainly displayed a noticeable lack of desire to play an active role in moulding the international environment. Rather, by opting to keep the world guessing, it was underlining the essentially 'preservative' nature of its approach to the Sudeten problem.

Risk-Taking Propensity: The Intervening Variable

The risk-taking propensity of the political elite during this period was understandably low. As the Foreign Secretary put it, not only could a landslide not be stopped once it had started, but no useful purpose could be served "by treading on the landslide and being carried down with it." [32]

During the first Cabinet meeting following Hitler's march into Austria, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Duff Cooper, had suggested that a dramatic gesture like an immediate and well-publicized increase in naval construction might well serve notice upon Hitler not to flout the international system again. Such a measure, he felt, could not but "impress Germany and world opinion which would not be impressed by an ineffective protest." [33] The Prime Minister and a few other members of the Cabinet had appeared to agree with him in principle, but later, they had reversed their stand. [34] Not only had the Chancellor of the Exchequer protested that any expansion, whether in the air or of the navy, would mean exceeding the total amount for defence that had been fixed in February 1938, but the Labour Minister and the Minister for Coordination of Defence had both claimed that skilled labour would not be forthcoming as the trade unions would not welcome sending more men into the rearmament industry. As a result the government would have to resort to mandatory measures to achieve its targets. It was this presumed lack of skilled labour that had apparently decided the Prime Minister to reverse his initial stand in the matter. "An attempt to produce all the requirements," he had concluded," at a greater speed than the labour supply will make possible will defeat its own ends." [35]

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[32] Foreign Policy Committee Minutes, F.P. (36) 26th mtg. 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62

Underlying these financial and labour-related difficulties was, however, the low risk-taking propensity of the political elite. Had it regarded the situational pay-offs to be higher, it could have mobilized the very forces, the shortage of which it was complaining. As it was, the perceived shortages only reinforced its basic timidity.

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[33] Cabinet Conclusions, 12 March, 1938. Cabinet 12(38), CAB 23/93.

[34] Cabinet Conclusions, 14 March, 1938. Cabinet 13(38), CAB 23/93.

[35] Ibid.

This timidity was clearly revealed on the question of a verbal protest to Germany following the Anschluss. Chamberlain and the majority of the Cabinet had favoured the milder of the two drafts that had been prepared by the Foreign Office. Not only had the Prime Minister not been sure that the British public necessarily favoured a stronger protest, he felt that the milder protest would have the great advantage of not exacerbating the existing situation. How a strong protest would have this detrimental effect on the situation was left unsaid. Halifax had indeed felt that this would not be case, that a strong verbal protest could be delivered without rendering the situation dangerous. "If the government wanted to get public opinion behind them, "he explained," they must show that they are not afraid to tell the dictators what they thought." [36] His colleagues were afraid of this very act, afraid of provoking Hitler the wrong way. In any case, Halifax could not have held his opinion very strongly for he quickly deferred to his Prime Minister's wishes.

The various reactions to the conditional commitment also provided evidence of the political elite's low risk-taking propensity. Central to these reactions was the fear that commitment might perhaps ruffle German feelings. It was stated, for example, that "the very elaborate machinery contemplated was highly provocative and would only be an excuse for strong German propaganda." [37] It was also feared that "a new commitment to France in respect of Czechoslovakia might involve us in war in the very near future..." [38] Even those who believed that the Foreign Office-inspired alternative had some merit suggested that the proposed commitment be granted only for a brief period. As the Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, put it," it would be very dangerous to enter into a commitment of this character without any limit of time." [39] The Foreign Secretary, however, did not believe that "the presence of a time limit would diminish the risks of the commitment." [40] Not willing to take any risks, he was of the opinion that Britain should merely (i) advise Czechoslovakia to "make the best terms with Germany while there was yet time" and (ii) inform France that she could not count on any assistance from Britain if she got embroiled with Germany over Czechoslovakia, that she would be well advised to exert her influence at Prague in favour of an accommodation with

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[36] Cabinet Conclusions, 12 March, 1938. CAB 23/93.

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[37] Foreign Policy Committee Minutes, F.P. (36) 26th mtg. 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

Germany.[41] In expressing this opinion the Foreign Secretary had the full backing of his Prime Minister. Chamberlain even turned down a suggestion by Oliver Stanley, the President of the Board of Trade, that Britain declare her non-preparedness to recognize any solution reached by the force of arms.[42] Such a suggestion was termed by the Prime Minister as a risk Britain could take only if she were prepared "in the last resort to go to war with Germany."[43]

The Causal Factors: Independent Variables

It is evident from the deliberations of the political elite that it was more responsive to certain kinds of factors than to others. The minutes of the Committee on 18 March make this abundantly clear. An analysis of those minutes reinforces our hypotheses to a significant degree. Of the 66 statements, dealing with the international situation from the Committee minutes of 18 March a large number, i.e. 16 statements indeed referred to the international stucture. This does no violence to the hypotheses as all the references were negative and like the 24 statements referring to the lack of salience of the Sudeten Issue, their main aim was to justify the 'preservative' course the political elite wanted to follow.

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[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

What actually decided the latter on this course were the factors of military strength and public opinion. We find 19 statements referring in one way or other to Britain's military vulnerability and seven references to public opinion, out of which four reflected the latter's existing state and partly influenced the decision against a 'promotive' or 'intransigent' course.

TABLE 6

TYPE OF VARIABLE	NUMBER OF REFERENCES	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL	RELATION TO FAVOURED ALTERNATIVE
Respect for Structure	16	24.2%	Negative
Issue Salience	24	36.4%	Negative
Military Strength	19	28.8%	Positive
Public Opinion	7	10.6%	Positive

There was no direct reference to the variable of political stability. It was no doubt taken for granted, the government having a substantial majority in Parliament. As for environmental hostility, it does not appear to have played a part in the choice of the adopted alternative. There were five references to the risks involved in a fresh commitment to France and these were indicative of the low risk-taking propensity of the political elite. There was no sign that hostility could be expected from the international environment in the immediate future.

We now proceed to a more detailed examination of the crucial variables.

__Military Strength:__ Military Strength was a powerful factor in influencing the policy orientation of the political elite. The military argument was rooted in a Chiefs of Staff memorandum, prepared that very month, on the subject. The political elite appeared to accept without question the views contained therein. According to the C.O.S. scenario, neither France nor Britain could help Czechoslovakia, France because it was defence-conscious and Britain because it had no troops to spare. Help from the air would be very difficult. Hence, the first conclusion of the political elite was that Czechoslovakia could not be saved. The C.O.S. memorandum then went on to say that having subjugated Czechoslovakia, Germany would try for a quick victory in France (if she could get around the Maginot line) and for a knock-out blow against Britain. It was difficult to predict whether Britain could withstand such a blow. ** Her anti-aircraft defences were deemed to be grossly inadequate. The existing AA guns were not good enough to meet any German challenge and those of the appropriate calibre were still under production. Naval bases and fuel storage depots were, and for a year at least would remain, vulnerable to enemy attack. This woeful state of affairs, doubly accentuated by the existence of an allegedly "vastly superior" German Air Force, led to the inevitable conclusion that only a limited defence of Britain (in effect, of London) was possible. This was the basis of the second conclusion of the political elite that in any war, Britain could not think in terms of victory, but merely survival. Of

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** "Chiefs of Staff Report on the Military Implications of German Aggression against Czechoslovakia" 21 March, 1938. COS 698. F.P. 36/57. The relative air strengths of the respective European powers, according to the C.O.S. memo, was.

	Bombers	Fighters	Tactic
Germany	1570	540	2110
Britain	420	420	840
France	450	300	750
Czechoslovakia	60	150	210

The political and military elites were victims of what Robin Higham has called "the knock-out blow complex." This was unfortunate since "the Germans at this time had neither, as far as we know, the plans nor the capability for such action as their air force was strongly army-oriented." Robin Higham, Armed Forces in Peacetime : Britain, 1918-1940. A Case Study, (London: Foulis, 19622), p. 183. Collier concurs in this view. He writes, "In the light of after-knowledge, it is quite clear that these fears were premature and exagerrated. As we know, the German Government had no intention of an immediate assault on London." Collier, op. cit., p. 2. Collier, incidentally, gives approximately the same figures for the German Air Strength as are given above. Ibid., p.66.

course, the C.O.S. memo stated that if Germany doubted she could deal Britain a knockout blow, she could be deterred from any action altogether by an indirect British commitment to Czechoslovakia. But it was obvious from the Memorandum that this doubt would not enter German calculations and that the said commitment would, therefore, not have the desired effect. [45]

Should Britain somehow manage to survive the knock-out blow, the resulting war would inevitably be a protracted one. Britain would still be committed to helping France - an enormous task considering that 1) only two ill-equipped divisions could be initially spared for that effort and 2) France was not well-prepared either, being politically and economically unstable, and possessing a disorganized armaments industry, inferior artillery and a badly outnumbered Air Force. This was the basis for the third political elite conclusion: that France, because of whom Britain would be involved in the war, could not expected to contribute much to the war effort. Britain's only hope, continued the C.O.S. memorandum, lay in the gradual slowdown of the flow of commodities essential to the German war effort. This led the political elite to its fourth conclusion, namely "our only effective weapon is the blockade and pending Germany's collapse under a blockade, other measures could be little more than gestures." [46] In its deliberations the political elite doubted even the effectiveness of a blockade if Germany took it upon herself to conquer Hungary and Rumania to augment her resources. In fact, felt one Cabinet member, Germany might even do this before attacking Czechoslovakia, simply in order to draw Britain's attenticn to her own pitiable state. [47]

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[45] A continental commitment had always been lowest in the scale of defence priorities. A proposal for a continental force had been turned down in 1936, on the grounds both of financial difficulty and public opposition. Leading this attack had been Neville Chamberlain who, as Michael Howard puts it, "remained implacably hostile to all ideas of involvement on the continent." See Michael Howard, The Continental Commitment (London: Temple Smith, 1972), pp. 113-7. This reluctance towards a continental commitment has been criticised by Peter Dennis who feels it was "the key to British security." "Without such a commitment," he says, "France could not be relied upon to resist German overtures and collective security would disintegrate piecemeal as each nation looked to its immediate interests. Unless Britain could be seen willing to play its part fully in the defence of Europe, its deterrent power, and conversely, its contribution to collective security, would be weakened." Peter Dennis, Decision by Default (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 128. Dennis was expressing what had been the bureaucratic sentiment in 1938.

The Chiefs of Staff concluded by stating that if both Italy and Japan were to enter on Germany's side, it would produce a situation which neither the existing nor projected defence strength of Britain was calculated to meet. [48] Britain would then have to choose between keeping its

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[46] Foreign Policy Foreign Policy Committee Minutes, F.P. (36) 26th mtg. 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62.

[47] Ibid.

[48] The C.O.S., in fact, had from autumn in 1935 onwards bemoaned the impracticability of facing these three nations simultaneously. Accordingly they consistently pressed for a diplomacy that would prevent such a contingency. Michael Howard, op. cit., pp. 118-19.

Mediterranean fleet in the Mediterranean itself (and thus sacrifice the Far East) or send it to the Far East (and thus lose the Middle East to Italy). Britain would thus be in a most unenviable position, the inevitable result of a military commitment, even indirect, to Czechoslovakia. The overall conclusion of the political elite was that such a commitment would be foolhardy and, far from having a deterrent effect on Germany, might even provoke her to attack Czechoslovakia. The argument was summed up by the Prime Minister in the following words:

> ...the more one studied the map of Central Europe, the more hopeless appeared the idea that any effective help could be swiftly brought to Czechoslovakia in an emergency. All railway communications with that country would be cut at once except, perhaps, that through Hungary and even the latter would be severed in a few days. It followed, therefore, that we should have to say that it was impracticable effectively to aid Czechoslovakia in time and that all that we could do would be to make war on Germany but we were in no position from the armament point of view to enter such a war and it would be most dangerous for us to do so.[49]

Public Opinion: The state of public opinion, both in Britian and the British Commonwealth, appears to have had a significant impact on the political elite. It was feared that the addition of a new commitment to Britian's existing ones would be highly unpopular. A commitment concerning Czechoslovakia might even "split public opinion in this country from top to bottom."[50] Surveying the opinion of the British press as an indication of opinion in the country, there was a definite basis for this statement. On the one hand there were the papers that spoke against a British military involvement in Central Europe. As Gannon has pointed out, these papers were basically united in the view.

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[49] Foreign Policy Committee Minutes, F.P. (36) 26th Mtg. 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62

> that the Sudeten German demands should not become a *casus belli* ; that there was justification on both sides; and that reasonable pressure by the British government upon Prague to make concessions was not untoward since the proper settlement lay in negotiation.[51]

The *Times*, though irritated by the events in Austria, still held forth on the essential wisdom of the policy of appeasement.[52] So did the *Daily Telegraph*.[53] The *Daily Express* was even more vociferous in its demand that Britain refrain from the quagmire of Central European politics.[54] The *Daily Mail* was also unequivocal on the issue:

> Today the resolve of the British people will have nothing to do with the situation in Central Europe. Not one British soldier, not one penny of British money must be involved in this quarrel which is of no concern to us.[55]

As opposed to these newspapers, there were others who pressed for resistance to Hitler. The basic theme that ran through the editorials of the *News Chronicle* was, as Gannon has sumarised it, that

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[50] Ibid.

[51] F. R. Gannon, *The British Press and Germany: 1936-1939* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1971) p. 162

[52] The *Times*, March (1938) Issues. Various Editorials.

[53] *Daily Telegraph*, 15 March, 1938. Editorial, p. 16.

[54] *Daily Express*, 12 March, 1938. Opinion, p. 12.

[55] *Daily Mail*, 15 March, 1938. Editorial, p. 12.

> The German action would at least wash the last grains of illusion from the sink of contemporary history with the realization that only one thing will make Hitler pause: his own weapon, the threat of force. With this in mind, the Western democracies should pledge to fight for Czechoslovakia if she were threatened by Germany.[56]

The News Chronicle line was echoed by the Daily Herald. If Austria was irretrievably lost, Czechoslovakia must not be allowed to meet the same fate. The paper pressed for the restoration, around Czechoslovakia, of the discredited system of collective security. For the paper this represented " the only chance for the future..."[57] The influential Manchester Guardian stated, "The British Government will have to consider its problems afresh. Rearmament is not itself enough. Everyone is rearming at top speed."[58]

If opinion in Britain was divided on the issue and a new commitment was seen as dividing it still further, opinion in the British Commonwealth was also characterized by the political elite as lacking in unanimity. As the Dominions Secretary, Malcolm Macdonald, put it:

> Australia and New Zealand would almost certainly follow our lead. Eire would no doubt take the same line partly because of her geographical position and partly because she would feel that on an issue of this kind, she could not take a line different from our own. But South Africa and Canada would

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[56] Gannon, op. cit., p. 159.

[57] Daily Herald 14 March, 1938. Editorial, p. 10.

[58] Manchester Guardian, 14 March. Editorial, p. 8.

> see no reason whatever why they should join in a war to prevent certain Germans from rejoining their Fatherland.[59]

A commitment to Czechoslovakia of the kind suggested by the Foreign Office would thus create pressures on Commonwealth unity, pressures that the institution might not be able to withstand. Fears were expressed by the political elite that because of the suggested commitment, "the British Commonwealth might well break in pieces."[60]

The political elite were reacting to the opinions known to exist in the Dominions themselves. According to Ovendale, who has investigated the matter at greater length than other scholars,

> with the exception of New Zealand, the Dominions were not opposed to the Anschluss, felt that Germany had legitimate grievances and were determined not to become involved in Central European conflict designed to prevent the Sudeten Germans from being absorbed into the Reich. The British Cabinet's assessment of Dominion opinion was accurate.[61]

The Australian Prime Minister informed Chamberlain that "his Government felt that no definite commitment should be undertaken with regard to Czechoslovakia."[62] Canada's Mackenzie King intimated that he was "more convinced than ever that to keep the British Empire out of a European War is the one means of saving the Empire."[63] But it was the South Africaan Prime Minister, Hertzog, who was most outspoken against Czechoslovakia, stating his country would never enter a war arising out of the Sudeten Question and confessing he saw no reason why "Great Britain should jeopardize the peace and interests of the Commonwealth by interesting herself in any of these questions to the extent of becoming a participant in a war arising out of them."[64]

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[59] Foreign Policy Committee Minutes, F.P. (36) 26th Mtg. 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ritchie Ovendale, Appeasement and the English Speaking World : Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the Policy of Appeasement, 1937-1938 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), p. 136.

[62] Pittblado to Caccia, Telegram, 23 March 1938. Enclosing Lyons to Chamberlain, Telegram Personal, undated. F.O. 800/310

Environmental Hostility: The political elite of Britain did not feel in March 1938 that it was confronted by a dangerous situation. The Anschluss might have created a new situation, but British interests were not seen to be jeopardized. Chamberlain did not think that Germany wanted to come in conflict with Britain over what the latter regarded vital. While invading Austria,

> Herr Hitler had studiously refrained from saying or doing anything to provoke us and, in small matters such as passport and exchange facilities for British subjects returning home from Austria, consideration had been shown. All this did not look as if Germany wished to antagonize us; on the contrary, it indicated a desire to keep on good terms with us.[65]

Considering Britain's interest in France, and in view of

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[63] Mackenzie King to MacDonald, 2 April, 1938. F.O. 800/310
[64] Aide Memoire on a Message from Hertzog to Halifax, 23 March, 1938. D.O. 114/94
[65] Foreign Policy Committee Minutes, F.P. (36) 26th Mtg., 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62

French ties with Czechoslovakia, Hitler might act with circumspection over the Sudeten question. Even if incorporation of the Sudetenland in the Reich was Hitler's long term aim, the possibility could not be dismissed that he might accept something less for the immediate future. After all, in his 1937 conversation with the Aga Khan, Hitler had only wanted autonomy for the Sudeten Territory - "something, in fact, similar to the arrangements which had been made between the United Kingdom and Eire" and he had further said that if this were done, "Germany would be prepared to guarantee the independence of Czechoslovakia."[66]

France, of course was the crucial factor, but if Hitler's aims in Czechoslovakia were limited, then the question of French intervention need not arise. In any case, France was not in a position to help Czechoslovakia even if she wanted to. As Chamberlain put it,

> No doubt France's army was good and would fulfil her expectations but in other respects e.g. finance, air, the domestic political situation, France was at present in a hopeless position. Her relations with foreign countries, Germany, Italy, Nationalist Spain were bad, while her influence in Central and Eastern Europe was steadily declining.[67]

In this way, by playing down the element of environmental hostility, the political elite rationalized the situation and justified its 'preservative' stance to itself.

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[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.

Respect for Structure and Issue Salience: The deliberations of the political elite were characterized by a lack of insistence on maintaining the basic international structure as it existed. There was little attempt to give consideration to the Foreign Office proposals. Rather, the main reaction of the elite was to complain that the proposals would be unacceptable to Hitler and that the British endeavour should be to think of a solution to which he would have no objection. Even the prospect of Czechoslovakia reduced to a condition of dependence upon Germany was not viewed with concern nor, indeed, was the possibility of Germany establishing its hegemony over Central Europe. The political elite seemed prepared to bend the system in accord with Hitler's wishes, rather than insist upon some form of compromise, as its bureaucratic counterparts desired.

Not surprisingly, then , the Sudeten Issue did not have for it the same salience as it did for the Foreign Office.[68] It was seen rather in terms of "prevent(ing) certain Germans from rejoining their fatherland." Czechoslovakia was regarded a "a modern and very artificial creation" that had no real roots in the past and real hope of surviving in her existing form in the future.[69] Depicting Czechoslovakia in this manner made it easier for the British political elite to convince itself that it need not play an over-active role in the European political system insofar as the Sudeten Issue was concerned, that indeed the time for that had not arrived. This was its tragedy. For when it did irrevocably decide to put its impress on the international environment (in March 1939, through its guarantee to Poland), Hitler had passed the point of no return on his slow march to megalomania. In March, 1938, however, it appeared quite willing to accept the Sudeten Question as essentially one of "domestic concern" between Germany and Czechoslovakia, a fact that would make Germany "strongly" resent "any suggestion that the question be settled for her by foreigners."[70]

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[68] In fact, Chamberlain admitted this publicly when he stated that Czechoslovakia was "an area where Britain's vital interests were not concerned in the same degree as they were in the case of France and Belgium." Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 333 (1938), 1403.

PHASE II (APRIL - MAY, 1938): THE PROMOTIVE PHASE

Nature of Policy Orientation

If phase I was distinguished by a singular unwillingness on the part of the political elite to inject any meaningful initiative into the international environment, the phase that followed saw an increase in the desire to do something constructive to resolve the problem that faced Europe. This phase may be said to have begun somewhere in the first week of April. Two statements, one by Halifax and the other by Chamberlain, both made at this time, show a spirit that is clearly different from that which dominated the March deliberations of the political elite.

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[69] Foreign Policy Committee Minutes F.P. (36) 26th Mtg., 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62
[70] Ibid.

Halifax's statement, made to Ambassador Henderson, was clearly activist in tone. "I do not think," he wrote, "that we ought to give up the idea of getting on to terms with them (Germans), difficult as it no doubt is. Too much depends on the chance to let it go..." [71] If this statement evidenced a belief that the Germans were still amenable to persuasion, the statement by Chamberlain indicated that firmness could be fruitfully employed in this direction. Responding to the C.O.S. pleas that staff conversations with France not take place, Chamberlain felt it somewhat anomalous that Britain should accept obligations and then hesitate to make them good. The relevant minutes, dated 6 April, 1938, run as follows:

> He (Chamberlain) could not reconcile the acceptance of such obligations with the frequent rejection of French approaches which only meant that our action would not be decided until the emergency arose. His opinion in this matter had been reinforced by what had happened in Austria. In modern warfare, the aggressor was able to move with such rapidity that there was not time for making plans. He thought, therefore, that all

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[71] Halifax to Henderson, 4 April, 1938. F.O. 800/269

> concerned would be easier in their minds if each knew what part the other could play. [72]

The last sentence is particularly interesting. If the broad conclusion of the March deliberations had been that Europe should be left guessing as to what British attitude towards the German challenge generally and the Sudeten Issue specifically should be, the April statement of Chamberlain suggested that a clearer delineation of her attitude might be in Britain's interest. A statement by Halifax a week later made this quite clear.

> Britain, he said, should discourage too broad an interpretation in Prague of the phrase about it being 'well within the bounds of probability that other countries besides those which are parties to the original dispute' might become involved, while giving greater emphasis to it in Berlin so as to warn the German Government of the danger that in any aggression against Czechoslovakia, they might be causing more widespread trouble than they thought. *By this policy, it might be possible to bring both sides to reason*(italics mine). [73]

Bringing two sides of a dispute together is a central characteristic of a 'promotive' stance and it is this stance that may be said to characterize the policy-making dynamics of the period. In the opinion of Britain's political elite, the induction of a reasonable attitude in the Czechs and the Germans meant the following: If the Czechs could be persuaded to meet "60 per cent or 70 percent" of the German demands, it behoved the Germans to accept the Czech offer.

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[72] Cabinet Conclusions, 6 April, 1938. Cabinet 18(38), CAB 23/93.

[73] Cabinet Conclusions, 13 April, 1938. Cabinet 19(38), CAB 23/93

"If, however, they rejected such a compromise and insisted on the full 100 percent of their demands," it was stated "then there was the gravest risk that they could only achieve their object by war..." [74] This was clearly an example of the 'promotive' attitude. In specific terms, what the British leaders suggested was (1) that both they and the French make representations in Prague calculated to induce the Czech government to make generous concessions to the Sudeten minority and (2) that Britain alone make a demarche at Berlin calculated to induce a reasonable attitude in the Germans. The latter would be told of the efforts being made in Prague. They would be asked to refrain from hasty action. They would also be asked what their basis for agreement was. It was possible that they might reiterate the demands Henlein had made at Karlsbad. Having received this information, said the British leaders,

> We might then suggest that in our view, certain of these demands might be obtained, but that we regarded other demands as being unreasonable. If then the German Government refused to move from their position, His Majesty's Government could then say that they had done their best, and if, in spite of the representations they had made to the German Goverment, the latter nevertheless insisted on having recourse to force, they must realize what the dangers were. It must be clear to them that the French Government were bound by their treaty obligations to support Czechoslovakia, and the German Government must realize that His Majesty's Government had not said that they would not come in, too. [75]

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[74] Anglo-French Conversations, 3rd Mtg., 29 April, 1938. C 3687/13/17.
[75] Anglo-French Conversations, op. cit.

The Anglo-French Conversations of 28-29 April, 1938, during which these opinions were expressed, was the most crucial event in the phase. The movement of the British political elite along the 'promotive' road had been somewhat hesitant till then. The conversations, however, identified it with the 'promotive' line of thinking quite unambiguously. If the 'preservative' stand was characterized by a desire to escape from the problem, the 'promotive' stand manifested itself in a somewhat belated attemat coming to grips with it. The clearest expression of the stance is found in the Cabinet Minutes of 4 May, 1938, While replying to the questions on the Conversations the Foreign Secretary was reported to have said

> The aim of his policy was to avoid saying anything which could be construed as a commitment over Czechoslovakia. His general line was to say to the Czechoslovak Government that they had to go as long a way as they could to meet the Sudeten Deutsch and to remind the Germans that two were required to make a settlement and they must help. At the end of the negotiations a position might be reached where we could say to the Germans that they could get, say 75% of what they wanted by peaceful means and urge on them the folly of risking war in order to get 100%. [76]

The demarches at Prague and Berlin that followed the Conversations and with the drafting of which Halifax was personally associated, reflected the two-pronged attack on the Sudeten Problem. The crux of the demarche at Prague lay in the exhortation to the Czech government to make "a supreme effort to reach a settlement with the representives of the Sudeten German Party in the interest of Czechoslovakia's survival, as well as of European peace."[77] Not only should negotiations with the Sudeten Germans be commenced at once - "Delay," said Halifax, "seems to me dangerous"[78] - but they should aim to be as comprehensive and as realistic as possible. The 'promotive' nature of the British role was worded thus by Halifax

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[76] Cabinet Conclusions, 4 May, 1938. Cabinet 22(38), CAB 23/93.

> If the Czechoslovak Government will keep His Majesty's Government informed of developments, His Majesty's Government will be ready at any appropriate moment and in any appropriate manner to use their influence to assist to secure a settlement, and that His Majesty's government are proposing to make plain to the German Government their keen interest in this question and their desire to help to promote a peaceful and equitable settlement of it.[79]

The demarche at Berlin kept the latter objective in mind. Halifax justified the British interest in the matter on the grounds that it could threaten the peace of Europe if not energetically dealt with. The British, on their part, felt it their duty "to offer any assistance that they can give - and they believe that in the present situation they are able to assist towards reaching an equitable solution."[80] In line with this, they were pressing the Czech Government "to go to the limit of concession in an effort to reach a comprehensive and lasting agreement with the Sudeten Germans."[81] They would expect the German Government, on their part "to use their influence with the Sudeten Germans in the direction of moderation and to work with His Majesty's government in promoting a settlement."[82] Halifax also requested the German Govenment to give him an idea of their desiderata. Once they possessed this, "His Majesty's Government would consider how far they could recommend acceptance by the Czechoslovak Government."[83] The accent in the whole demarche was on an equitable solution. In this context, it is interesting to note that the word 'equitable' appears three times in the seven paragraphs containing the substance of the demarche.

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[77] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 68, 4 May, 1938. C3837/1941/18 (21717).
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Halifax to Henderson, Tel. 138, 4 May, 1938. C3837/1941/18 (21717).

Risk-Taking Propensity: The Intervening Variable

Phase II was characterized by a slow and somewhat hesitant increase in the risk-taking propensity of the political elite. We have defined "risk" in our initial chapter as probability of negative pay-offs in any situation, i.e., the probability that a particular decision-alternative will not only not achieve the desired results but result in losses to the decision-maker. In phase I, neither an indirect commitment to Czechoslovakia, a grand alliance of anti-German nations nor even a firm protest to

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[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

Germany had been considered as capable of achieving the necessary pay-offs. Rather, these alternatives had all been seen in a negative light, as having a high probability of bringing harm to Britain. In Phase II, the decision alternatives were seen to be closer military co-operation with France and firm warning to Germany.

A certain instability marked the thinking on the first alternative. After initially expressing himself in favour of staff conversations with France, Chamberlain reversed his stand on the grounds that "the French General Staff and nation, as in 1914, will expect that, once we are committed to military co-operation we shall, in fact, be committed to co-operation on a far larger scale." [84] He did not go to the extent of his colleague, Inskip, who argued that the French be clearly told to base their war strategy on the assumption that Britain would not send any forces, even token ones, in the event of war. Even so, the British Prime Minister did say that British assistance on land would in any case, "be so small that it would be better that it should not form the subject of staff conversations." [85] This hesitancy was not pleasing to Halifax, who quite frankly told Chamberlain that

> in the immediate future, which can be forseen in some detail, we shall need to induce in the French a most collaborative disposition - to be precise, in regard to Czechoslovakia in particular if we

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[84] Cabinet Conclusions, 13 April, 1938. Cabinet 19(38), CAB 23/94.

[85] Cabinet Conclusions, 13 April, 1938. Cabinet 19(38), CAB 23/94.

> are to avoid grave dangers in Europe. We shall most certainly not induce this frame of mind in the French if we produce any unnecessarily bad effect upon them with this communication in regard to military co-operation.[66]

Halifax's argument in the atmosphere of Phase II was persuasive. The staff conversations were eventually agreed to. Thus, though Chamberlain pointed out the negative pay-offs in the matter, he did not rate their probability high enough to override his Foreign Secretary. Rather, he accepted Halifax's assessment of the positive pay-offs in the matter.

The other decision-alternative was a warning to Germany. It was the view of the political elite that "the German Government ought not to be encouraged to think that they could impose any settlement they want on Czechoslovakia by force or by threat of force."[67] Even more to the point, it was stated that

> although it was true that Great Britain was not directly interested in the lot of the Sudeten German, she was closely interested in the peace of Europe, and it could be pcinted out to the German Government that His Majesty's Government had made it plain to them that if the problems of Czechoslovakia were handled unwisely, this might lead to a European war.[68]

This decision-alternative found its concrete expression during the May Crisis of 1938. The details of the events leading to the crisis do not concern us here. There were incidents in the Sudeten areas, reported movement of troops by Germany and a partial mobilization by the Czechs. These developments were especially unwelcome to the British political elite who had expected that negotiations between the Czechs and the Sudeten Germans would start soon. The reports that it received indicated that Germany had moved her troops around initially. Halifax was also impressed by the threat made by the German Foreign Minister to the British Ambassador, to wit that "Germany could not sit by and allow Germans to be murdered...Germany would not wait much longer and if provocation continued, her 75 millions would act as one man." [89] After consulting with Cadogan, the Permament Under-Secretary, he felt he had no recourse, but to warn the Germans to stay their hand. Henderson was instructed to inform the Reich authorities of the British Government's strenuous efforts to "promote a peaceful solution of this question." It had tried to influence the Czech authorities to move in this direction. The Czech response had been good and it was therefore "imperative to give this opportunity of favourable development every chance of maturing." But if the German Government did not cooperate and if as a result of this non-cooperation, a conflict arose, then it should be warned that

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[66] Halifax to Chamberlain, 14 April, 1938. C 3233/G (21653).
[67] Anglo-French Conversations, op. cit.
[68] Ibid.

> France has obligations to Czechoslovakia and will be compelled to intervene in virtue of her

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[89] Henderson to Halifax, Tel. 202, 21 May, 1938. C 4663/1941/18 (21720)

> obligations if there is a German aggression on Czechoslovakia. Indeed, French Ministers have repeatedly stated to His Majesty's Government that France would certainly so act. In such circumstances His Majesty's Government could not guarantee that they would not be forced by circumstances to become involved also.[90]

Originally, this warning was meant to have been used to get the Germans to accept those Czech concessions thought reasonable by the British. In the circumstances, however, with a grave situation before them the use of the warning was perhaps justifiable. Of course, the political elite knew that in issuing this warning it was taking a calculated risk. It would be hard to extricate itself from the consequences of the warning, should it be ignored. The probability of negative pay-offs was therefore perceived to be fairly high. But the value placed on the positive pay-offs was high, too. This increased the willingness of the British elite to ignore the perceived risk. As it was, the warning was seen to have achieved the positive pay-offs in question. Yet, curiously enough, this fact did not, as we shall see, encourage the political elite on a bolder course with regard to the Sudeten Issue.

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[90] Halifax to Henderson, Tel: 169, 21 May, 1938. C 4776/1941/18 (21721)

The Causal Factors: Independent Variables

Military Strength: This variable cannot explain the slow, but definite increase in the risk-taking propensity of the political elite and the consequent shift in the policy stance from 'preservative' to 'promotive'. There was no dramatic reversal in the perception of Britain's relative military position. Rather, the disadvantageous military position was sometimes stressed. For example, the French were told that

> His Majesty's government regarded the military situation, viewed specifically from the military angle, with considerable disquiet. Not only was the military situation of Czechoslovakia exceedingly weak; His Majesty's Government could not regard the position of France and Great Britain as very encouraging in the event of German attack upon Czechoslovakia. [91]

The British leaders referred to the dismal report of their Chiefs of Staff Committee on the subject, adding that not only did the rapid refortification of Rhineland worsen their own relative position, but that the troubled internal politics of Russia prevented her from being looked upon as a potential ally. The French were also informed that

> in view of the weakness at present of our defensive position, we thought it necessary to be very careful not to undo any good which had been achieved by these conversations with Italy by exciting Italian or German suspicions that we were now devising fresh military, naval or aerial combinations designed to injure those two

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[91] Anglo-French Conversations, op. cit.

powers.[92]

The position of the political elite regarding this variable thus did not shift from what it had been in Phase I. To some extent this is not surprising. For example, as Peter Dennis has pointed out, "the rearmament programme as it affected the Army had been based on a policy of avoiding a continental commitment."[93] In fact, in April, 1938, the estimates submitted by the War Minister were reduced by 70 million pound sterling. This was not a major sum, but the cut certainly could not have enhanced Britain's military position in the eyes of the political elite. On the other hand, in the same month, defence was allotted priority over normal trade and a search was begun for a sources of aircraft supply in the United States and Canada. Of course, it was realized it would take time before the full effect of these decisions was seen. In any case, in adopting a 'promotive' stance during this phase, the political elite was still far from giving France a military commitment.

Public Opinion: This variable also did not appear to have an appreciable impact upon the shift from the 'preservative' to the 'promotive' stance. Public opinion was still seen as very much pacific:

> The British public were....very nervous about land commitments, and His Majesty's Government were

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Dennis op. cit. p. 184

> anxious to avoid being drawn unconsciously and against their will into any engagements regarding the assistance they could render on land in a continental war.[94]

This point was emphasized in the Conversations with the French when the latter contended that a military alliance between France and Britain, revolving around Czechoslovakia, would deter Germany from aggressive manoeuvres against the threatened nation. The British Prime Minister replied that he was certain

> public opinion in Great Britain would not allow His Majesty's Government to take such a risk, and it was no use for this Government, or indeed for any other Goverment, to go beyond its public opinion with the possible effect of bringing destruction to brave people.[95]

The British Press had not dramatically changed its tone from what it had been in Phase I. _The Times_ reiterated its faith in "moderation and peaceful methods to promote mutual understanding of difficulties."[96] The _Daily Telegraph_ emphasized that Britain was not a partisan in the matter and should intervene only as "a friendly interpreter."[97] The _Daily Mail_ warned the Government not to assume automatic obligation to defend Czechoslovakia.[98] The _Daily Express_ called out stridently for British non-involvement: "Don't take sides yourself yet, don't get into the frame of mind of taking sides."[99] Sometimes, it gave way to an outright Czecho-phobia: "So Czecho, No. No. A thousand times No."[100] Of course, the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Herald* still kept lobbying for a commitment, as they had done in Phase I, but they were a distinct minority.

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[94] Anglo-French Conversations, op. cit.
[95] Ibid.
[96] _The Times_, 23 May, 1938. Editorial, p. 15.
[97] _Daily Telegraph_, 23 May, 1938. Editorial, p. 12.
[98] _Daily Mail_, 23 May, 1938. Editorial, p. 10.

The consensus amongst Dominions continued to be that Britain refrain from active involvement in the Sudeten Issue. As in March, South Africa seemed to be the most concerned. She urged that France "come to support some policy of European peace which will safely leave European hegemony to mature under the aegis of whichever nation of Europe may be most deserving of it."[101] Such a task was more easy to suggest than to accomplish. It was in a sense, the task Britain's political elite had set itself, quite independently of the South African suggestion. But rather than lay the heavy hand on France, a step that it feared might have undesired consequences, it preferred the gentler touch. Public opinion was not the responsible factor for the shift fom the 'preservative' to the 'promotive' stage. If anything, the Dominion Doctrine of non-involvement mitigated against such a shift. That such a shift did take place speaks for the effectiveness of the factor ~~that~~ follows.

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[99] *Daily Express*, 23 May, 1938. Opinion, p. 10.
[100] *Daily Express*, 30 April, 1938. Opinion, p. 10.
[101] Hertzog to Halifax, Tel. 8, 5 May, 1938. C /1941/18/(2172). As Field Marshall Smuts wrote to Lord Lothian, "on Great Britain is imposed the duty of a very cautious policy. She is not directly interested and she knows all the Dominions are averse to European complications." Smuts to Lothian, 20 May, 1938. Lothian Papers 367.

Environmental Hostility: What did influence the British political elite was the presumption of environmental hostility. In other words, what did matter was the dreaded implication for Britain of France's commitment to Czechoslovakia. [102] The British political elite took it for granted that any French involvement in a Central European War would have repercussions harmful to Britain. In case this involvement led to a German attack on France it assumed unquestionably that Britain would have to go to France's assistance if only in her own interest. "Whether we liked it or not," confessed Halifax, "we had to admit the plain fact that we could not in our own interests afford to see France overrun." [103] What worried and to some extent, irritated him and his colleagues was that Britain could not control either the extent or the direction of French involvement in Central Europe. In short, the decison to go to war, for all practical purposes, rested not with Britain, but with France. The Foreign Office had attempted to tackle this problem in their March Memorandum, but the caution of the political elite had caused the bureaucratic recommendations to be rejected without suggesting anything constructive in its place. Its immediate concern had been to devise a response to the German challenge that would leave the door open for a variety of responses later on. With the pressure on it lifted in April a somewhat hesitant ' forward' policy became thinkable. This trend was certainly evident in the statements of the two leading members of the political elite - Chamberlain and Halifax. Not surprisingly, since France was the key factor, the trend was most clearly confirmed in the conversations the British had with the French towards the end of April, 1938.

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[102] Weinberg states that Britain was at this time alarmed at "the growing tension in German-Czech relations." Gerhard Weinberg, "The May Crisis, 1938," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 29-30 (1957-58), p.214.

[103] Foreign Policy Committee Minutes, F.P.(36), 18 March, 1938. CAB 27/62.

During these conversations, Halifax made it clear to the French leaders, the British Government "regarded the future with an anxiety and a concern which was hardly less than that of the French Government." [104] The French, it may be pointed out, had reacted to the environmental threat in a different way. In March, 1938, while the British political elite was adopting a 'preservative' attitude, the French were manifesting a clearly 'intransigent' stance. It is not our purpose to go into the reasons for this here. We wish only to indicate how this intransigence expressed itself in the French enunciation of their position during the Anglo-French Conversations. The French political leaders assumed, as to a certain extent did their British counterparts, that as far as Hitler was concerned, "his real object was the destruction of the present Czechoslovak state."[105] Unlike the British, they read into this ominous implications for the future of Europe. Czechoslovakia would be merely the first step in Hitler's policy of expansion. "The ambitions of Napoleon," they claimed, "were far inferior to the aim s of the present Reich."[106] It is for this reason France regarded her defence treaty with Czechoslovakia "vital" and considered "it must be respected and executed."[107] The attention of the German Government should be unambiguously drawn to the point "beyond which they could not go with impunity." This was the 'intransigent' element in French thinking since it both resisted change beyond this point and was prepared to back this resistance, by force if necessary.[108]

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[104] Anglo-French Conversations, op. cit.

The 'promotive' element in Phase II was largely the result of a British attempt to meet the French half-way. Britain's aim may still have been to wean France away from her obligations, but with France considering her treaty as vital, and moved by the assumption that as long as this treaty remained, the threat of war remained, it felt it best to humour France. An assurance to make Germany respect "justice and the public law of Europe" was the price the British political elite had to pay for a French declaration of intent to make the Czechoslovak Government more amenable to the Sudeten demands.

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[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

PHASE III (JUNE - AUGUST, 1938): THE PRESERVATIVE PHASE, AGAIN

Nature of Policy Orientation

With the passing of the May crisis and the revelation of the French lack of will, the political elite in Britain began to think less of an equitable solution that it could enforce on the two countries involved. It began more to think of the concessions that Czechoslovakia could give. Once again, in its thinking, the integrity of Czechoslovakia became a dispensable luxury. Halifax informed the Cabinet on 25 May, 1938 that Benes might conceivably have to offer the Sudeten Germans a plebiscite, if a negotiated settlement became impossible. Further, he told his receptive colleagues, he would like to see Czechoslovakia "move into a position of neutrality which, like the neutrality of Switzerland, would be witnessed by the nations concerned." [109]

This neutrality was urged upon the Czechoslovak Minister the same day. The latter was told that even with the best will in the world, France and Britain would not be able to save Czechoslovakia from the German onslaught, should there be one. A declaration by Czechoslovakia of her neutrality might "in the way least savouring of external dictation, get rid of the elements in the present position that were particularly the source of German resentment." [110] It was quite possible that the declaration might be futile, that the said neutrality might prove ephemeral, but Czechoslovakia

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[109] Cabinet Conclusions, 25 May, 1938. Cabinet 26(38), CAB 23/93.

> would at least be in no worse position than they were today with guarantees that could not be effectually exercised in time to save them, and that they might be reckoned to be so much better off, in as much as under some such plan, the principal elements of provocation to Germany would no longer exist." [111]

If the neutrality solution was mooted by Halifax to the Czechoslovak Minister, the plebiscite idea was not. The latter was merely told that "the least which the Czechoslovak Government would be able to get away with on the internal side would be something that could be reasonably represented as autonomy on what might be termed the Swiss model." [112] The reason for the British reticence was not any sudden dislike of the idea. Though the political elite thought Czechoslovakia too vulnerable militarily, it was apprehensive that the wrong sort of pressure on the Czechs might make them dig their toes in thus creating the very situation it wished to avoid. It therefore had to recognise that the limiting factor was what the Czechs were prepared to accept. They could not be pushed to the point where they preferred to go to war rather than give in further.

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[110] Halifax to Newton, No. 262, 25 May, 1938. C 4915/1941/18 (21721).

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

The same argument applied to the plebiscite idea. Halifax had neither supported nor rejected the 'solution' when it was first mooted in March. Support had been ruled out on the grounds that all options should be kept open till the last possible moment. In May, 1938, as we have seen, he had come out in favour of the solution whilst reporting on the situation to the Cabinet, but he had refrained from making this support public. He did not apparently share the resentment of the Foreign Office at the "plebiscite" leader published by The Times on 3 June, 1938. The letter that he wrote to The Times editor had been noticeably lukewarm. But he appreciated the sentiment expressed by H.M.G. Minister in Prague that "if integrity and independence of a country, which had been restored after 300 years of extinction were endangered and Czechs became desperate, the army might then take over." [113] Consequently, he specifically asked the latter to dissociate the British Government from the line take by the Times. The next month, however, as reports came in of an impending deadlock in the Czech-Sudeten negotiations, he warned the Czechoslovak Minister in terms that came close to, without expressing an open approval of, the idea of a plebiscite.

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[113] Newton to Halifax, Tel. 259, 2 June, 1938. C 5359/1941/18 (21723).

Indeed the political elite hardly seemed to move during this phase. It almost seemed as if it was not sure of the direction it should take. Where one argument could be evoked for some promising initiative, there were two which bespoke the virtues of caution.

June was the month when negotiations between the Sudeten Germans and the Czechoslovak Government had picked up. The political elite in Britain watched these negotiations from the sidelines, as it were. The minimal activity there was on the part of the political elite was directed at the Czechs. Even here, predictably enough, it refused to go beyond generalities in the periodic comments it conveyed to the Czechs on the matter. For example, the Czechoslovak Government was informed in early June that any unwillingness on its part to move along lines considered reasonable by the British would have an "immediate and adverse effect upon the interest taken in the problem in this country" [114] Its appreciation of what was "reasonable" was not intimated to the Czechs. Again, the Czechs were told in the week following that they could hope to save the situation only if Henlein were given something "substantial" in the near future. There was no elucidation of what "substantial" meant in its opinion. Towards the end of the month, Halifax was writing that the Czech Government" should educate the press and public to the need for unpleasant concessions."[115] Again, he remained silent on what these concessions should be. Such was the reluctance of the political elite at any overt involvement in the matter that it refused to be drawn into relevant details, if it could help it. Newton, for example, was complaining in June, " In accordance with our general policy of avoiding getting drawn into details, I have deliberately refrained from asking to see the proposals submitted to the Sudeten Party."[116] He was, of course, referring to the proposals submitted to the Sudeten negotiations by the Czechoslovak Government. With this sort of attitude, it was not surprising that the pattern of elite response during this phase was to give general exhortations to the Czechs, on the one hand, and accept the Czech assurances that they were doing their best, on the other. It preferred to let the Czechs move at their own pace, hoping only that they would be wise enough to adjust this pace to the needs of the situation. As Halifax wrote that summer:

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[114] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 142, 31 May, 1938. C 5234/1941/18 (21723).

> I have no intention of pressing the Czechoslovak Government into any course incompatible with their

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[115] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 176, 22 June, 1938. C 6200/1941/18 (21725).
[116] Newton to Halifax, Tel. 227 Sav., 18 June, 1938. C 6055/1941/18 (21725).

> integrity and independence. At the same time, there is undoubtedly a point, as yet to be impartially ascertained, up to which, but not beyond which, the Czechoslovak Government should not only go from the point of the safety of their own interests, but would be exceedingly well-advised to go.[117]

A notable example of this inactivity was the reluctance of the British Cabinet, in the aftermath of the May Crisis, to urge the Czechoslovak Government to countermand its quasi-mobilization. It was felt that any such pressure might draw upon Britain the consequences of such a demobilization. Supposing the Germans were to attack whilst the demobilization was taking place, Britain would be under a moral obligation to protect Czechoslovakia. In other words, the British leaders felt, by interfering in the Czechoslovak defence problems, Britain might be asking for the very kind of commitment she was trying to avoid. For the same reason, it could not bring itself to ask Prague to revoke the mid-June announcement of the extension of compulsory military service, even though it feared that such an announcement would have an unfavourable impact on the Czech-Sudeten negotiations which, much to its relief, had already commenced.

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[117] Halifax to Wickham-Steed, 25 July, 1938. C 7798/1941/18 (21730). The available evidence thus goes contrary to the orthodox view, as stated by Webster, that during the summer of 1939, the British Government exerted "immense" pressure at Prague "to change the whole structure of the Czechoslovak state in order to satisfy the demands of the Sudeten leaders." Charles Webster, "Munich Reconsidered: A Survey of British Policy," International Affairs, Vol. 37 (1961), pp. 143.

Had the elite been more involved than it was or had the desire to be, the third phase would still not have been a 'promotive' one. Involvement alone is not enough. The spirit in which the involvement takes place is important in the 'promotive' category. It is important to remember this when analysing the Runciman Mission of July-August, 1938. True, the Mission indicated a greater degree of involvement of the British in the Sudeten Issue, but it was not an involvement undertaken with the purpose of modifying the relevant environment. It had the far less ambitious purpose of keeping the lines of communication between the Czechoslovaks and the Sudeten Germans open, thus depriving Hitler of the opportunity of exploiting the situation. It was an effort by the British to play for time.[118] In Runciman's own words, the main aim of his mission was "to hold the fort."[119] In fact, he asked Halifax, in his first letter from Prague, how long he would be required to do this. Halifax, rather optimistically, even seemed to believe that the presence of Runciman in Czechoslovakia might tend to restrain Hiter from sending his troops in.

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[118] German irritation at the Mission was expressed in a letter from Ribbentrop to Halifax. The German Foreign Minister wrote that, "The sending of Lord Runciman was decided upon by the British Government in agreement with the French and Czechoslovak Governments without our participation. The Reich Government was not informed of this until afterward. In these circumstances, the Reich Government must disclaim any responsibility for whether the efforts of Lord Runciman lead to success or not." Ribbentrop to Halifax, No. 379, 21 August, 1938. Documents on German Foreign Policy. Series D, Volume II.

[119] Runciman to Halifax, 10 August, 1938. C 8510/1941/18 (21732).

It must be remembered that the British suggested the 'mediator' only when it became apparent that the negotiations had bogged down and that an internal crisis in Czechoslovakia might result if no action were taken. The manner in which the proposal was presented to the Czechs and to the Germans is an indication of the state of mind of Britain's political elite. The Czechs were asked to "invite" the mediator, thus giving the world the impression of the proposal emanated from them.[120] The Germans were not even asked whether a 'mediator' was desired by them. It was feared they would reject the idea if approached for their approval. This Britain could not permit - since only a 'mediator' in the opinion of its political elite could prevent the situation from deteriorating. This point needs to be stressed, at the risk of repetition. After Bonnet's startling statement of 23 May, 1938, France had displayed little concrete evidence of deserting her Central European ally. She had, of course not displayed her earlier enthusiasm for the treaty between them. She had, as the British saw it, not put more than lukewarm pressure on the Czechs to show the requisite generosity to the Sudeten Germans and had patently hesitated over the "perfectly credible" alternative of neutrality for Czechoslovakia.

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[120] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 25 Saving, 18 July, 1938. C 7141/1941/18 (21727).

Runciman was not sent by Halifax to find a solution to the Sudeten problem, but rather to prevent the problem from becoming a crisis. This essentially 'preservative' goal was reflected in a remark he made to Runciman. If the latter was unsuccessful in his endeavour, he said, he was merely "to record the fact with regret and come away."[121] This would be the safest course. Putting blame on either side could merely harm Britain. If blame were attached to the Sudeten Germans, Berlin might protest and loudly accuse the 'mediator' of partiality. If blame were attached to the Czechs, it would unnecessarily build up the German case for a forcible solution. Runciman was clearly told that he should not come out with a plan of his own. Such a plan could only cause embarassment to the British Government since they might be called upon to guarantee it. Yet, at the beginning of September, Halifax was urging Runciman to come out with a plan of his own. By then, of course, the 'acquiescent' phase in the elite thinking had already become apparent. At this point, equity was a concept far from Halifax's mind. He merely wanted a plan that would placate the Reich and prevent Hitler from committing himself irrevocably before his Nuremberg speech.

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[121] Halifax to Henderson, 5 August, 1938. C 11048/1941/18 (21743).

Risk-taking Propensity: The Intervening Variable

The deliverance of the warning to Germany - and in fact the whole exercise in 'promotive' decision-making had involved a moderate amount of risk-taking. It was risk-taking induced by the French fact, but it was risk-taking all the same. In using firm language at Berlin, the British Foreign Secretary had been reasonably sure that it would achieve its objective of defusing the situation.

With the crisis over, the 'preservative' strand in the thinking of the British political elite expressed itself in its disbelief that "the reasons which had induced the German Government to exercise moderation on this occasion would be equally potent on all other occasions in the near future." [122] If in the future, a "particularly startling incident" occurred, Hitler might not be able to control his extremists, as he had done on the present occasion. Thus it was that Halifax stated

> While I thought it had been right, and I hope useful, to use firm language as we had done in Berlin, we ought, as between ourselves, to be prepared to face all the facts without attempting tc minimise their true significance." [123]

One of the obvious facts to be faced was that the British could not hope to stop Hitler in case a "startling" incident provoked him to launch a full-scale attack upon Czechslovakia. In May, 1938, Britain's political elite had gambled and won - but it was not sure it could win again. The attribution of its success more to the prevailing circumstances than to the warning itself was not calculated to inspire it with any confidence.

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[122] Halifax to Newton, No. 262, 25 May, 1938. C 4915/1941/18 (21721).

[123] Ibid.

The decrease in its risk-taking propensity during this phase was most clearly evidenced by its reluctance to involve itself in any meaningful fashion in the Czech-Sudeten negotiations that stretched over the summer. In fact, its participation in the actual mechanics of the negotiations was a very restricted one. It feared that any active involvement would lead it to pronounce openly upon the various schemes that might come up for examination. More than that, it feared that willy-nilly, it might be led to back-up one scheme or the other. This was a responsibility it refused to undertake. Such responsibility could increase the range of British commitments and the political elite, in its 'preservative' state of mind, was not ready for it. British support for a particular scheme would, in Halifax's words, mean "some obligation to support Benes if he carried it out." [124] In doing this, Britain could set herself on a path of confrontation with the Germans. She could either back out and risk humiliation or she could carry on and risk war. Neither course was appealing to Halifax or Chamberlain or to any other members of the political elite.[125]

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[124] Minute by Halifax, 26 April, 1938. C 3868/1941/18 (21717).

The political elite's attitude towards Germany is the clearest manifestation of its 'preservative' thinking during the third phase. It reveals a fear of the German might and an exaggerated respect for German touchiness that was the mark of the first phase as well. In the aftermath of the May Crisis, for example, the Foreign Office suggested that observers be dispatched to the Sudeten areas to examine the problem with a view to recommending a solution to it. This suggestion was rejected by Halifax on the grounds that Hitler, smarting over his diplomatic defeat in the May Crisis, would not tolerate such an affront to his amour propre.[126] For a similar reason, he also rejected another suggestion that the observers confine themselves to investigating the frontier incidents. Hitler would never allow observers on his side of the border. Ultimately, the observers were dispatched, but they were to confine themselves to Czechoslovakia and restrict themselves merely to investigating racial incidents as they might arise. The injunction forbidding the observers to involve themselves in the broader politics of the area was in line with the political elite's generally cautious approach to the problem in this phase.

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[125] Halifax rationalized this inactivity by arguing that "an immediate peaceful solution of the German problem was not out of the question." Minute by Halifax, 2 June, 1938. Halifax Papers, F.C. 800/314. He did, however, add the proviso that "if the Czechs did not give a suitable degree of autonomy, we may consider the possiblity of more active steps in 2-3 months time." Ibid. The crucial phrase here was the reference to the Czech grant of autonomy. Britain would consider active steps only if the Czechs failed to make the necessary concessions. There was no reference to what Britain might do if Germany failed to act reasonably.

[126] F.O. Minutes, 2 June, 1938. C 5334/4839/18 (21773).

In August, 1938, the Germans announced a partial mobilization partly to show their contempt for the Runciman mission. The British bureaucratic elite suggested that a public request be made to Germany to cancel the military manoeuvres, failing which a public warning could be delivered. The political elite agreed that such a request should indeed be made, but preferred to keep it private to avoid possible humiliation if it were rejected.[127]

As will be indicated in the following chapter, the bureaucratic elite fought a losing battle with the political elite over the question of a suitable warning to Hitler. Whereas, the former believed that Hitler had settled on direct action and had even decided the day he should commence it, the latter believed that the dictator's mind had not been made up and that a blunt warning would only move it the wrong way. This was made especially clear by Chamberlain on the occasion of Ewald von Kleist's visit to London in the third week of August, 1938. He discounted most of what von Kleist reported. He refused to believe that the 27th of September had been set by Hitler as the target date. The reports of moderate elements in Germany conspiring against Hitler smacked to him of "Jacobite intrigues." He, therefore, refused either to direct an explicit warning to Hitler or to utter public words of encouragment to the German moderates. All that he recommended was that the British Ambassador in Berlin be summoned back publicly for consultations.[128] This weak reaction was expecially significant in the light of the major concessions the Czechoslovaks were reported making to the Sudeten Germans at this time.

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[127] Memo by Halifax, 11 August, 1938. C 7892/65/18.

Indeed, the 'warning' at Lanark delivered by Simon on 27 August, 1938, was a rehash of Chamberlain's warning of 24 March, 1938 - and thus inappropriate to a situation that had developed considerably in the intervening period. The special meeting of Ministers that took place on August 30 decided against an explicit warning or an indirect commitment to Czechoslovakia - an echo of their deliberations in March.

The extent of the political elite's 'preservative' state of mind is shown by Chamberlain's remark to the American Ambassador, towards the end of August, 1938, that President Roosevelt, too, refrain from giving Hitler a warning.[129] One does not know what caused Chamberlain to make this remark. Such a warning must have been far from

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[128] Chamberlain to Halifax, 19 August, 1938. Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939. Series III, Volume II, p. 686.
[129] Minute by Horace Wilson, 30 August, 1938. PREM 1/265.

Roosevelt's mind. One can only put down this remark to an unwonted nervousness on the British Prime Minister's part. One can regard this nervousness as a prelude to the last phase in the thinking of the political elite - the 'acquiescent' phase.

Causal Factors : The Independent Variables

Military Strength: Britain's relative military position was perceived to have worsened over summer. Towards the end of August, Chamberlain was reported to have said that the country's strategic position was "somewhat worse than in May, France being weaker and the political position vis-a-vis Italy having deteriorated." [130] The 'promotive' stance, in the context of the Sudeten Issue, did involve the political elite's preparedness to utter a warning similar to the one delivered in May. As we have seen though, immediately after the May Crisis, the wisdom of its possible repetition in the future had been put in doubt. Chamberlain highlighted the strategic basis for this stand when he stated in August that "no state, certainly no democratic state, ought to make a threat of war unless it is both ready to carry it out and prepared to do so." [131] The Minister of Co-ordination of Defence, Sir T. Inskip, explained that

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[130] Minutes of Ministerial Meeting, 30 August, 1938. CAB 23/94.
[131] Ibid.

Britain had not reached her maximum preparedness and would not do so for a year or so.[132] The Air Minister, Kingsley-Wood, referred to Britian's sorry position in the air. "Any attempts to bomb Germany," he said, "would bring a terrible retaliation on this country." He would look "with great apprehension at the prospect of war at the present time.[133] The War Minister, Hore-Belisha, reported a similar state of affairs on land. "We cannot at present," he said, "put an army into the field large enough to have any decisive effect."[134]

The military factor thus had an appreciable influence in moving the political elite from the 'promotive' back to the 'preservative' phase. Even during the former phase, this factor had been constantly exerting a force away from the field of 'promotive' endeavour. During the third phase, it combined with other factors to make this movement possible.

Public Opinion: The predominantly pacific nature of British public opinion, as it had been perceived by the political elite, had been another factor that had constantly impelled it away from a 'promotive' stance. During the second phase, it had been temporarily nullified by other forces. In the third phase, it had an additive effect reducing the willingness of the political elite to take risks. The warning, a primary ingredient of 'promotive' pressure, was disavowed in no certain terms. As the Minister of War, Hore-Belisha, said in August, "A threat of war could only be made if there was an overwhelming public demand at first. Such a demand did not exist." [135] The political elite felt now, as it did in March 1938, that any threat to Germany and by implication, any open support to Czechoslovakia would split public opinion both in Britain and the Commonwealth. As the Prime Minister put it, "The policy of an immediate declaration of threat might well result in disunity in the country and in the Empire." [136] The Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, stressed Commonwealth unity on the grounds that "The British Commonwealth of Nations and the USA together were the only force which could eventually check the progress of dictatorship; one day this combination might have to defeat the growing evil." [137] He thus pleaded that the Government "should not take a step now which would break the Commonwealth." He had little doubt, he concluded, that the Dominions "would be in favour of holding this country back "from committing herself to a possible military engagement in Europe."

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.

Looking to the Press as a primary source of the elite perception of public opinion, we find that the feelings of the political elite had some basis in fact. The Times, the most influential of papers as far as officialdom was concerned, was more concerned with Czech "intransigence" than with Hitlerian aggressiveness. Hitler was portrayed as desirous of avoiding a war, preferring rather to search for a road back to an Anglo-German rapprochement. The latter, it claimed, was a distinct possibility if only Czechoslovakia could be got out of the way. "In the field of Anglo-German relations in general," it wrote," it is a question at the moment only of the possibilities which will arise once the Czechoslovak difficulty is out of the way." [138] It was optimistic that this difficulty could indeed be removed. Towards the end of July, it wrote that Chamberlain was "certainly entitled to claim that the general outlook is more favourable now than it was six months ago. There is less thought of war and little fear of war." [139] The Daily Telegraph was a little less sanguine although it accepted Berlin's contention of non-involvement in the issue. It felt that with a show of compromise, the matter could be resolved and that the maximum that Britain could do was to encourage the development of such a spirit. The Daily Mail continued its show of "Czechophobia." Like all papers, the Manchester Guardian supported the dispatch of the Runciman mission, but unlike most, it guessed at the real reason for the mission. Britain had to play for time. "Negotiations, conferences, investigations - anything to tide over until autumn when military action would be impossible for at least six months."[140] The paper thus faithfully, and quite independently, echoed the official line. This line of least resistance was, of course, criticised by the News Chronicle. "Playing for time," it wrote in July, "would be justified only if the Government knows that Germany is genuinely anxious to avoid a crisis and that there is more prospect of doing this if the issue is not precipitated now."[141] The paper, however, believed that Hitler was behind the Sudeten agitation and that the key to the solution of the problem lay not in Prague, but in Berlin. The News Chronicle accordingly pressed for a Grand Alliance of Britain, France and Russia to thwart Nazi expansionism. At the very least, it concluded, Britain should not reach an agreement with Germany that would be imposed on Czechoslovakia. The Daily Herald did not go to the extent of advocating such an alliance. It continued advocating some resistance to Hitler: "...sensible people know that what happens in Czechoslovakia may well decide the whole issue of peace and war for our generation."[142]

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

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[138] The Times, 25 July, 1938. Berlin Correspondent, p. 12.
[139] The Times, 27 July, 1938. Editorial, p. 15.

If the majority sentiment in the Press was against any active resistance to Germany, the same was the case with the

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[140] Manchester Guardian, 26 July, 1938. Diplomatic Correspondent, p. 6.
[141] News Chronicle, 22 July, 1938. Editorial, p. 8.
[142] Daily Herald , 25 July, 1938. Editorial, p. 8.

Dominions. A plebiscite solution had come naturally to the Times, it seemed. It came with a similar ease to the representatives of Australia and South Africe. At a meeting with the Dominions Secretary on 25 May, the Australian delegate stated that the cession of the Sudeten areas would be a wise step if it resulted in a politically satisfied Germany.[143] The South African High Commissioner suggested the cession take place immediately.[144] The New Zealand and Irish delegates did not speak. Canada was not represented at the meeting, but it was clear from the attitude of the main political groups in that country where her interests lay.[145] According to Ovendale,

> Britain was limited by the attitude of the Dominions. There was no question of British policy being dictated by the Dominions; their opinion was rather one factor that had to be considered. In this instance it was, perhaps, a major factor, as it was feared that a British guarantee to Czechoslovakia might lead to a disintegration of the Commonwealth.[146]

Ovendale goes on to say:

> Hertzog, Mackenzie King and Lyons were among Chamberlain's most ardent supporters in his efforts to reach agreement with the dictators, and Dominon opinion together with the military situation, had decided the Cabinet on its policy

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[143] Note of a Meeting with Dominion Representatives, 25 May, 1938. DO 114/92.
[144] Ibid.
[145] According to Ovendale, "From March to September 1938, all major Canadian political groups were opposed to any Canadian commitment to Europe. Canadian Orientation was more towards the geographical situation of the country as part of the North American continent than as a member of the Commonwealth." Ovendale, op. cit. p. 136.
[146] Ibid., p. 125.

towards Czechoslovakia.[147]

Public Opinion was thus a factor in the political elite thinking and as such, a factor in the shift from 'promotive' back to the 'preservative' phase.

Environment Hostility: The primary impetus for the shift from Phase II to Phase III came from the perceived reduction in the probability of threat to Britain's important interests. Immediately after the May Crisis, France showed herself prepared to forsake her obligations to Czechoslovakia, should the need arise. On 23 May, 1938, the British Ambassador in Paris, Sir E. Phipps, wrote of Foreign Minister Bonnet's declaration to him that

> if Czechoslovakia was really unreasonable, the French Government might well declare that France considered herself released from her bond.[148]

This was the first time the French had ever mentioned the possibility of not observing their treaty with Czechoslovakia. The importance of this declaration cannot be under-rated. It was this treaty, as pointed out earlier, that had been the source of anxiety for the British. It was because of it that a threat from the environment had been felt. With the possibility thus opening up of the French being weaned away from Czechoslovakia, and thus of escaping from the problem rather than frustratingly tackling it, the

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[147] Ibid., p. 137.
[148] Phipps to Halifax, Tel. 150, 23 May, 1938. C 4722/1941 (21720).

'preservative' strand in the British political elite's thinking was revived. As Halifax told the Cabinet on 25 May, British policy must develop in the light of the French attitude. The French shakiness made it possible and, in view of the probable impermanence of any Sudeten settlement, indeed desirable, for Britain to endeavour "to obtain a release for the French from their obligations."[149] The British political elite had never thought Czechoslovakia worthy of saving, whether from military, moral or practical angle. Militarily, the Anschluss had exposed the Czechoslovak flank to the German troops; morally, Czechoslovakia was seen to be denying a minority some of the rights to which it was entitled. Practically, Czechoslovakia could never hope to be re-constituted as it was, even if France were to win the hypothetical war. During the Anglo-French conversations, the British leaders had indeed accepted the Czechoslovak fact in deference to French susceptibilities. Chamberlain had informed Daladier that he shared the latter's desire that the Czechoslovak Government not be coerced to make concessions that would affect her integrity. He had agreed that the 'allies' - at one point this word was inadvertently used by him - should press Benes to put forward only those proposals which "although they would alter the character of the Czechoslovak state as we had known it hitherto, would not bring about its destruction."[150]

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[149] Cabinet Conclusions, 25 May, 1938. Cabinet 26(38), CAB 23/93.

The equitable solution it later advocated in Berlin had to some extent implied a respect for the integrity of Czechoslovakia. If this seems somewhat in contradiction to its feelings towards Czechoslovakia in the previous phase, we have to remember that this respect was born not of conviction, but circumstances. It was an induced respect, not the deep-seated respect that the bureaucratic elite felt. With the French loss of will, this induced respect suffered as well. The wheel turned a full circle back to the 'preservative' stance.

PHASE IV (SEPTEMBER, 1938): THE ACQUIESCENT PHASE

Nature of Policy Orientation

September began with the Sudeten Issue nowhere near solution, with France still disconcertingly tied to Czechoslovakia and the Nurenberg Parteitag uncomfortably near. The latter was an idee fixe of the political elite. As Halifax put it, Hitler would be certain to speak about Czechoslovakia - and the British goverment's primary task would be to prevent him from "committing himself to extreme action."[151] Only two ways seemed possible to forestall him. One was the explicit warning that the bureaucratic elite had insisted upon. The other was coming up with a solution that satisfied Hitler.

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[150] Anglo-French Conversations, 3rd Mtg., 29 april, 1938. C 3687/13/17.

The latter appeared the less risky alternative and Halifax felt, the time had come to actively press the Czechs to make more concessions than they had been willing to make. In making this decision, any pretence of an equitable solution of the Sudeten Problem was abandoned. Hitler's demands and the extent to which they could be complied with was all that mattered for Britain's political elite.

It was not surprising, therefore, that it expressed itself in favour of bluntly telling the Czech President, through both Runciman and Newton, that if he did not agree to the Karlsbad demands, he could forswear any possible British support.[152] Benes had already been considering presenting the Sudeten Germans with new proposals and this blunt warning from the British finally persuaded him to do so. The proposals, when they emerged, talked of uniting the three German districts under one German Committee, of establishing national registers and guaranteeing language equality. Runciman pointed out that these proposals "meet Karlsbad 8 points in a practical way and to a very great extent."[153] But the political elite was not satisfied. It felt that these proposals would be rejected by Hitler and that the Czechs consequently would have to go further.

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[151] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 247, 31 August, 1938. C 8947/1941/18 (21733).
[152] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 247, 31 August, 1938. C 8947/1941/18 (21733).

Nothing short of a plebiscite, it was felt, would satisfy Hitler. Though his long-awaited Nuremberg speech contained no definite threat - the British inner Cabinet decided "it might prove impossible to deduce any very definite conclusions from the speech"[154] - Hitler had come out strongly in favour of self-determination. The inner Cabinet - consisting of Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon and Hoare - admitted that a plebiscite would be extremely unwelcome to the Czech Government and might prove difficult to conduct. However, if a plebiscite could possibly avoid war, then it ought to be given favourable consideration. The inner Cabinet - the most powerful institutional organ of the political elite - consoled itself with the thought that Britain need not take the initiative in the matter. If the idea was raised formally by Germany, she would merely "expose the difficulties and ask how they could be met."[155] In thus accepting the plebiscite in principle, Britain's political elite was hesitatingly accepting an idea it had considered, but found difficult to propagate in earlier months.

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[153] Newton to Halifax, Tel. 517, 6 September, 1938. C 9323/1941/18 (21735).
[154] Note of a Meeting of Ministers, 12 September, 1938. C.S. (38) 1.
[155] Ibid.

Whilst accepting the idea in principle, the British Cabinet felt the volatile situation in Czechoslovakia might make its actual conduct difficult. Following Hitler's speech there had been racial clashes in the Sudeten area, martial law had to be imposed in a few districts and the Czech-Sudeten negotiations had finally broken off. Most members of the Cabinet felt that though a plebiscite might be accepted in principle - and Hitler's demands thus given substantial acceptance - its actual implementation might be delayed by a few months. Not only would the delay get the Czechs used to the idea, it would minimize its negative impact on British prestige. Simon, who had first mooted the possibility of delay, had suggested that it cover a period of 5 years. Chamberlain thought this impracticable and advocated a delay of only 6 months. With this, the other members of the Cabinet agreed.[156]

At this point, the general feeling was that "the immediate acceptance of a plebiscite would be a complete surrender."[157] Chamberlain thought that the idea of a delayed plebiscite might be put up to Hitler, should he insist on self-determination in their forthcoming talks. He announced that he would conduct his forthcoming conversations with Hitler on the following lines: 1) that Anglo-French pressure had made Benes go "much further than expected" 2) that if Hitler wanted an immediate solution, Lord Runciman could be requested to arbitrate and 3) that if this was unacceptable and a plebiscite was demanded, he (Chamberlain) would enter "into no definite engagement." He would only say that "in certain circumstances, the idea could be discussed." "One alternative," as he acknowledged, "was of course, a plebiscite in about six months time, after the Reservists had been demobilised, and under the auspices of an international commission." [158]

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[156] Cabinet Conclusions, 14 September, 1938. Cabinet 38(38), CAB 23/95.
[157] Ibid.

The fact that none of these points were put up to Hitler [159] is indicative of the deepening acquiescence in this phase. Chamberlain omitted to mention Benes's extensive concessions when Hitler spoke of the Sudeten grievances. He did not mention the possibility of an arbitration when Hitler complained that the situation could drift no longer. And when the Fuhrer spoke threateningly of Sudeten self-determination to the point where he said he would risk a world war to obtain it, Chamberlain abandoned efforts to point out the practical difficulties and gave his personal acceptance of the idea. At this juncture, he could have qualified his acceptance, personal though it was, with another personal statement opting for a period of delay. He did nothing of the sort.

On his return, Chamberlain explained to the Cabinet that the atmosphere at Berchtesgaden had been such as had prevented him from making attempts "to put smaller points, or to try and impose conditions, or to get Herr Hitler to accept alternative solutions which seemed reasonable here..."[160] Hitler had impressed him as an extremely determined man who had meant to get what he wanted and "would not brook opposition beyond a certain point."[161] In other words what Chamberlain was telling his colleagues was Hitler had wanted to put his stamp on the international environment and he (Chamberlain) had thought it unwise to stand in his way. This was the essence of an acquiescent stance. The Cabinet hardly expressed any disagreement with the Prime Minister. With the exception of Duff Cooper (First Lord), no one expressed resentment at Chamberlain's lack of firmness with Hitler.

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Memo by Schmidt, No. 487, 15 September, 1938. Documents on German Foreign Policy. Series D, Volume II.

If the pre-Berchtesgaden Cabinet consensus had been in favour of a delayed plebiscite, the post-Berchtesgaden consensus was in favour of an immediate, albeit well ordered plebiscite. The elite opinion thus fully reflected Hitler's demands. Only a small section of the Cabinet felt that the acceptance and the execution of a plebiscite in the prevailing circumstances would be tantamount to a humiliating surrender, to peace with dishonor.

The next important step in the policy dynamics of this phase was the abandonment of the unconditional plebiscite in favour of an outright cession of the Sudeten areas to Germany. The occasion for the conversion was the talks that Chamberlain and Halifax had with the French leaders, Bonnet and Daladier, on 18 September 1938.[162] The latter admitted that the circumstances were now different from what they had been in April and that "the principle of maintaining the unity of Czechoslovakia" could no longer be insisted upon. They argued that the efforts of the two Goverments should rather be directed at preserving as much of it as possible and in such a way as to obviate the need for the French to discharge their obligations to the Czechs. They opposed the idea of a plebiscite, however, on the grounds that it would give the Germans a weapon that could be constantly used to keep Europe in tension. They could invoke it not only with respect to the German minorities over the Continent, but other dissident minorities as well, in case it suited their interests. Faced with the French objection to a plebiscite, Chamberlain suggested that Czechoslovakia be asked to cede the Sudeten areas to the Reich.[163] The cession would be a particular solution to a particular problem and would not involve the general appproval of the self-determination principle the French feared so much. Thus, at the French instigation and without consulting the full Cabinet, a decision was taken that marked a further development in the policy of acquiescence. The argument was of course persuasive. Since the results of a plebiscite were a foregone conclusion, why not dispense with it altogether? Why not avoid the practical difficulties of conducting a plebiscite the British apprehended or the domino effect the French feared. If there was agreement on the substance, surely no one would insist on the form. It was of course realized by the inner Cabinet that public opinion might object to the latter. Astonishingly, it felt that this difficulty could be overcome by an announcement that between a plebiscite and cession, Benes had chosen the latter.

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[160] Cabinet Conclusions, 17 September, 1938. Cabinet 39(38), CAB 23/95.

[161] Ibid.

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[162] Record of Anglo-French Conversations, 18 September, 1938. C 10729/1941/18.
[163] Ibid.

Thus from a delayed plebiscite to an immediate one to the outright cession of the Sudeten areas, Britain's political elite displayed a markedly aquiescent trend in its interaction with Hitler. Cession was not all. When the French suggested that in ceding the areas, Czechoslovakia's defence needs be kept in mind, Chamberlain retorted that cession having being agreed to in principle, the size or the nature of the relevant areas should not be allowed to come in the way. In fact, felt Chamberlain, there was "no use returning to Herr Hitler with the intention of imposing conditions." [164]

Yet Hitler had not exhausted his demands. At Bad

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[164] Cabinet Conclusions, 17 Sepember, 1938. Cabinet 39(38), CAB 23/95.

Godesberg, on 22 September, 1938, during his second meeting with Chamberlain, he audaciously demanded not only the acceptance of a boundary that he had drawn up arbitrarily, but immediate occupation of that boundary followed by plebiscite after a period of time. The question before Britain's political elite was whether it should acquiesce in Hitler's new demands. It had already yielded to his original demands which, in terms of substance had been more important. Chamberlain certainly felt that the new demands should be accepted.[165] These demands, he argued, were not radical ones, but a mere advance on those already accepted by the Cabinet. They did not involve a significant increase in the area to be transferred. All they involved was an increase in the speed of its transfer. Could this, in itself, justify a fearsome war? Could it justify the loss of the opportunity offered to improve Anglo-German relations, now that a basis of mutual trust had been established between himself and Hitler. Desperate, Chamberlain was unwilling to "leave unexplored any possible chance of avoiding war."[166] The penultimate part of the 'acquiescent' phase is thus characterised, on the one hand, by his persistent advocacy, amongst his colleagues, of the need to completely accept Hitler's demands and on the other, by his personal appeals to Hitler to unbend a little.

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[165] Cabinet Conclusions, 24 September, 1938. Cabinet 43(38), CAB 23/95.

[166] Cabinet Conclusions, 25 September, 1938. Cabinet 44(38), CAB 23/95.

While there was some opposition amongst his colleagues, the overall acquiescence of the political elite was shown by the fact that of the 18 members of the Cabinet, over half wanted Czechoslovakia to accept Hitler's expanded demands. As for his appeals to Hitler, they added up to what, in the existing circumstances, was an admission of defeat. Chamberlain, though, was past caring about prestige. An essential rationale drove him on. All he wanted was to avoid war at any cost. He felt it highly incongruous that Britain should fight for a far-off and little-known country over an issue she did not deem vital.

The appeals to Hitler focused on the need for an International Commission to plan and supervise the transfer. The Commission could be enjoined upon to complete its work within a stated time period. What this might be was left somewhat vague. There were strong hints that the preparatory work of the Commission could be accomplished in a week's time. The appeals did not omit pointing out to Hitler that he would be getting "all the essentials" he wanted and that the Czechoslovak Government could be depended upon to comply "fairly and fully and forthwith." [167]

The time table that was despatched to Berlin on 27

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[167] Halifax to Henderson, Tel. 428, 27 September, 1938. C 11030/1941/18.

September, 1938 [168] reflected both the readiness of the political elite for an immediate transfer of Sudetenland to Hitler, the substantive issue, as well as the desire of a minority of the Cabinet that the transfer be orderly, a mere question of procedure. The Germans could occupy two Sudeten districts - Egerland and Asch - by October 1 while the International Commission worked on the delineation of the new frontier. By October 10, German troops could move into the further areas indicated by the Commission. The latter would finish its task by October 31 and the German Army would be in complete control of the ceded areas on that date. A Czechoslovak request that the final date for the transfer be extended from October 31 to December 15 was turned down by Halifax. The Czechoslovak Government was asked not to "render more difficult the Prime Minister's already delicate task by formulating and insisting on objections to the time table..." [169]

As it happened, the Munich Pact advanced the date for the complete cession of Sudetenland to October 10. There was not much difference between this date and the date Hitler had mentioned at Bad Godesberg. The only difference was that an International Commission would give the transfer a specious air of authority and legality. The time limit on the transfer had been the crucial difference between Hitler's Berchtesgaden and Bad Godesberg demands. Britain's political elite had given in readily to the former and were ultimately persuaded to give in, to a large extent, on the temporal question as well. The term 'acquiescent' therefore appropriately portrays its outlook during the final month of September, 1938.

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[168] Halifax to Henderson, Tel. 434, 28 September, 1938. C 10883/1941/18.
[169] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 388, 29 September, 1938. C 11027 (21743).

Risk-taking Propensity: The Intervening Variable

As we have mentioned, the fourth phase began with the political elite debating how best Hitler could be prevented from committing himself to extreme action during his Nurenberg speech. Two decision alternatives existed, one was to present Hitler with a solution he could not refuse; the other was to give him an explicit warning that would hopefully have a deterrent effect. The first alternative was hardly a risk in terms of our definition; the second, however, was. The confusion displayed by the political elite on the matter culminating in the eventual and definitive dismissal of the idea casts an interesting light on its risk-taking propensity during this phase.

We shall see in the next chapter how Halifax came to contemplate the idea of making a public speech in which he would refer to British confidence in themselves and their preparedness to go to war, if necessary, for the "vindication of vital principles."Chamberlain, however, thought the suggested (wrongly, in his opinion) that Czechoslovakia was a cause worth fighting for.[170] An equally telling comment was made by Halifax himself, as he shelved the speech : " Public speeches are likely to do as much harm as good."[171] Chamberlain's risk-taking propensity was already low - he had, for example, already instructed the Foreign Office not to encourage the Press to think that a warning had been sent to Hitler via the British Ambassador in Berlin. The comment by Halifax highlighting the element of risk he felt lay in a public speech revealed that his risk-taking propensity was not much higher than Chamberlain's.

The idea of a public warning gave way to a private warning to be delivered to Hitler at Nuremberg by the British Ambassador. Instructions were sent to the latter to deliver such a warning. They were countermanded, revived once again and then finally buried. There appeared therefore to be fluctuations in the risk-taking propensity of the political elite before it plummeted to the level that definitively established the 'acquiescent' character of the phase. The fluctuations reflected not only the lack of confidence of the political elite in its own judgement, but also the conflict between its ideological propensities and pleas from highly placed German governmental officials to get through to Hitler. The reasons given for not sending the warning were: 1) that it would violate the 'keep Germany

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[170] Minute by Chamberlain, undated, PREM. 1/265.
[171] Halifax to Henderson, personal letter, 6 September, 1938. C 11048/1941/18 (21743)

guessing' policy of the Goverment,
2) that it would interfere with the Runciman mission which had still not collapsed,
3) that its deterrent value would not lessen with the passage of time
4) that it would allow the power of decision to make war pass into the hands of another country, and finally,
5) that it might needlessly provoke Hitler into doing what he might otherwise hesitate to do.

The last reason was the crucial one. As Sir Samuel Hoare writes, the Inner Cabinet of 10th September, 1938 concluded that "another warning after the many that (Hitler) had received, was more likely than not to excite him and push him into war." [172] A warning was, therefore, not expected to deter him (the desired pay-off) but rather to drive him over the brink (the feared deprivation). The probability was therefore high that the warning would lead to an overall negative pay-off. As such it was unacceptable to the political elite.

The progressive acceptance of the concepts of delayed plebiscite, immediate and ordered plebiscite and cession of the Sudeten territories provided further evidence of the unwillingness of the political elite to take any risks as far as Hitler was concerned Having accepted the quintessence of Hitler's demands, the only decision-alternative involving risk was whether conditions ought to be imposed on Hitler or not. The pay-offs were only in terms of prestige; the deprivations were, of course, the plunging of an entire society into war. Even earlier, in debating the concept of a delayed plebiscite, what had been actually involved was the imposition of a condition upon Hitler, i.e. a plebiscite in six months, instead of a condition involving Britain in a risk of war. Now, having agreed to Hitler's major demand (for the Sudeten areas) and to his major condition (that the cession be made as quickly as possible), the political elite felt that certain marginal concessions could be demanded of Hitler.[173]

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[172] Hoare (Templewood), op. cit., p. 301.

These concessions related to three areas. One set related to the area to be transferred. In his further discussions with Hitler (the concessions were enunciated after the Berchtesgaden, but before the Godesberg meeting), the Prime Minister might perhaps try to improve on the 50% principle. He might also try to obtain a smaller geographical unit for this ethnographical compilation than the contemplated 'district'. Lastly, he might insist that the new frontier would have to be delineated by an international commission and would have to take into account geographical, economic, strategic and administrative factors. The second set related to the financial aspects of the transfer. The Prime Minister could perhaps, press for an acceptance by Germany of a part of Czechoslovakia's public debt, proportionate to the territory being taken over. He could also ask the Germans to compensate for their immovable property the Czechs who were leaving Sudeten land. The third set of concessions proposed related to some military gesture from Hitler, either partial demobilization, withdrawal of troops from the frontier or at the very least, halt of further mobilization.

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[173] Cabinet Conclusions, 21 September, 1938. Cabinet 43(38), CAB 23/95.

Chamberlain flew to Bad Godesberg on 22 September, 1938. From the risk-taking perspective, of primary importance to us is whether he was able to conform to the policy brief he carried. Chamberlain did indeed stress his desire for an orderly transfer, the first essential of which would be the setting up of an international commission to delineate the frontier.[174] A 65% German majority would be its guiding figure, taking into consideration, as a matter of course, political, geographical and military considerations etc. as well as the wishes of the local inhabitants. When, instead, Hitler presented him with an arbitrarily drawn border, Chamberlain's reaction was one of scarcely concealed dismay. He tried to reason with Hitler but on the latter proving obdurate, abandoned the effort. He no longer insisted on the 65% German majority principle nor did he question the amount of area to be ceded. As for immediate occupation by German troops, he asked Hitler whether he would not delimit the area of occupation to that containing 80% or over German inhabitants. As for Hitler's demand for a plebiscite, Chamberlain, forgetting the grave objections of the French to the idea, suggested to the German leader that though a plebiscite for the predominantly German area was not called for, he would be willing to suggest a plebiscite for the mixed areas. Hitler rejected both these compromise solutions and insisted with somewhat unnecessary aplomb, on these two essentially procedural demands. He also refused to entertain the idea of any financial compensation to Czechoslovakia that Chamberlain had half-heartedly raised.

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[174] Notes of Conversation at Godesberg, Documents on British Foreign Policy. Series III, Volume II, pp 463-73 and 499-508.

Chamberlain's inability to extract concessions from Hitler whose significance, in the existing context, far outweighed their ostensibly marginal content, was a product as much of Hitler's obduracy as it was of Chamberlain's own low risk-taking propensity. A section to the Cabinet, it is true, indicated a somewhat greater willingness to take risks than did Chamberlain, in that it still believed that some conditions should be imposed on Hitler, lest he think that he could act with impunity in the future. As we have pointed out though, the majority of the Cabinet still supported Chamberlain and displayed the same order of risk-taking as did he. The British political elite had "played it safe" in both the 'preservative' phases, but it carried this type of behavior to its extreme point in the final, or 'acquiescent', phase.

Causal Factors: The Independent Variables

Military Strength: Britain's relative weakness in the military was undoubtedly a significant factor in the shift from Phase III to Phase IV. The reality of Hitler's threat probably reinforced the already dismal view the political elite took of Britan's military strength.

The report that the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee produced at the direction of the Cabinet was certainly not calculated to alter this view. Britain's military elite felt that 'Germany will probably be able to dispose as great, if not greater, strength than the combined strength of the 3 allies."[175] Germany, thus, would be able to contain any offensive in the West. Further, the bulk of action would have to be borne by the French as the most that Britain could spare, after subtracting the forces needed for its defence and the defence of the Middle East, would be two divisions. In the air, Britain could expect a bombing of 500 tons a day and retaliate with only 100 tons of bombs a day (and that too, only for a limited period). Since the air defences were "far from complete," an air offensive against Germany would be of doubtful value. [176] Britain's sole hope was at sea where Germany could be prevented "from obtaining any marked success even by unrestricted warfare." Britain would still be faced with the unenviable task of deciding between her Mediterranean interests and her Far Eastern interests - her navy was too small to defend both adequately. The conclusions of the military elite therefore were 1) Czechoslovakia could not possibly be saved 2) Britain would find herself in a prolonged, destructive struggle 3) Should Italy and Japan actually intervene, the situation would become extremely perilous.

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[175] Report of C.O.S. Sub-Committee, 13 September, 1938. COS 766. CAB 53/41. Another document which could have exercised an influence on the political elite was the report prepared by General Ismay, C.I.D. Secretary, on the Comparative advantages of fighting Germany in 1938 as opposed to fighting her a year later. The conclusion of report had been that Britain would be in a far better position militarily in 1939 than she was in 1938. Note on the Question of whether it would be to our military advantage to fight Germany now or to postpone the issue by General Ismay 22 September, 1939. CAB 21/544. The Chiefs of Staff agreed with this assesment.

As Inskip, the Minister of Coordination of Defence, wrote of the C.O.S. report,

> It reaffirmed our view that no pressure we and France could bring to bear, by sea, land or air could stop Germany over-running Bohemia, and inflicting a decisive defeat on Czechoslovakia. The war would be an unlimited war... economic pressure by the Navy would be our only hope. [177]

Then significantly, Inskip wrote, "Prime Minister saw this report before he left Heston on September 15 for his talk."[178] The talk that Inskip was referring to was, of course, the first talk Chamberlain had with Hitler at Berchtesgaden. If the C.O.S. report was one of the last documents he saw before flying to Germany, its contents must have been fresh in his mind and carried some weight with him during the meeting with Hitler. Convinced during this meeting that Hitler would go to war over the Sudeten Issue, the report, reinforcing his own view of the military situation, must have prompted his slide into acquiescence.

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[176] A special task force had come to the conclusion that it was not feasible to bomb Germany. The C-in-C of the Bomber Command, suggested to the political elite on 19 September, 1938 that his aircraft could merely drop leaflets over Germany in the event of a war. According to Robin Higham, Britain's vulnerability in the air weighed heavily with Chamberlain at the time of Munich. "Neither Home Defences nor the deterrent were in a position to meet the German threat of aggression.... The only thing that could be done was to appease Hitler when Britain lay so naked to air attack." Chamberlain's pessimism, he continues, was however to extreme as "the Germans had neither the plans nor the capacity to strike London." Higham, op. cit., p. 185.

[177] Inskip Dairy, 16 September, 1938.

The strategic factor figured prominently in the meetings of the British Cabinet thereafter, as it occupied itself with the Hitlerian demands. During the meeting on 17th September, for example, convened immediately after Berchtesgaden, Canning's dictum that Britain should not intervene anywhere until it could do so with overwhelming force was used with great effect. It was at this meeting that a delay period for the conduct of a plebiscite in Sudetenland was decided upon. During the meeting on 25th September, convened after the Bad Godesberg meeting, the overall feeling was that "though Hitler's new terms were disgusting, strategic factors, especially air inferiority, would compel acceptance."[179] Three familiar strategic themes were stressed with great vigour: Britain's defences were relatively weak; Britain's international strategic position was none too strong; and Czechoslovakia had no hope of being saved. Chamberlain even summoned the Military Attache in Berlin, Colonel MacFarlane, to give his views at a meeting of the inner Cabinet and quoted him later on in the full Cabinet on 27th September as saying that the Czechoslovakia's morale was "very poor" and its material preparedness highly unsatisfactory.

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[178] Ibid.

[179] Cabinet Conclusions, 25 September, 1938. Cabinet 46(38), CAB 23/95.

It can thus be said, with some confidence, that the military factor, as perceived by Britain's political elite, did play an important role in influencing its risk-taking propensity and its policy orientation in the fourth and final phase of the Sudeten Issue.

Public Opinion: Public opinion had been a significant factor in Phase I, had a negative impact in Phase 2 and had a positive, not negligible impact in Phase 3. Its impact in Phase 4 is a little more difficult to determine. Unlike Phase 1 and Phase 3, there does not appear to have been a clear link between public opinion and the dependent variable viz. policy orientation. In fact, in none of the earlier debates on the feasibility of a plebiscite, do we find the political elite stating that public opinion would be supportive of its decision.

There was some basis for this. Of the major newspapers, only the Times favoured a plebiscite solution for the Sudetenland. "....the advantages to Czechoslovakia of becoming a homogenous state," it stated in its leader of 7 September, 1938 "might conceivably outweigh the obvious disadvantages of losing the Sudeten German districts of the borderland."[180] This view of the Times was criticised by the other papers, amongst them the papers that had been against interference in Czechoslovakia during Phase I. Prominent amongst them was the Daily Telegraph which wrote of the Times leader, "No more sinister blow could have been struck at the chances of a settlement."[181] Even the Daily Mail and the Daily Express which had spoken stridently against an active British interference in the Sudeten Problem were against a timid surrender to Hitler. The Manchester Guardian proclaimed itself against the 'preservative' policy of keeping other nations, particularly Germany, guessing about the British attitude. "We must not," it stated, "take the risk, that should war come, it should anywhere be said that it would not or even might not have come had Hitler known."[182]

Thus at the time the British political elite was settling on the idea of a Sudeten plebiscite, the British press was gradually moving away from the idea of surrendering to Hitler. When Hitler's Berchtesgaden demands (as manifested in the Anglo-French proposals of 19

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[180] The Times, 7 September, 1938. Leader, p. 13.
[181] Daily Telegraph, 8 September, 1938. Editorial, p. 12.
[182] Manchester Guardian, 12 September, 1938. Editorial, p. 10.

September, 1938) became publicised, the only paper to support them was the Times. The Daily Telegraph was unenthusiasic about these proposals (as manifested in the Anglo-French proposals of 19 September, 1938) but considered their acceptance worthwhile if it ensured peace. The Manchester Guardian however, called the proposals nothing else but "an ultimatum with a short time limit," the effect of which was that "the whole fabric of European order was rent asunder."[183] When the scenario moved on to Hitler's Godesberg demands even the Times could no longer extend support to the Government. The Daily Telegraph said that "throughout the crisis, all the concessions have come from one side and all the extractions and provocations from the other."[184] It asserted that this process had to come to a halt[185] - an opinion with which none of the other papers demurred. Perhaps, the section of the British Cabinet that differed with Chamberlain at this point was partly influenced by this negative attitude of the British press. Duff Cooper in fact stated that there would be a veritable "explosion of public opinion" should the exact nature of Hitler's Godesberg terms become generally known.[186]

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[183] Manchester Guardian, 20 September, 1938. Diplomatic Correspondent, p. 11.

[184] Daily Telegraph, 30 September, 1938. Editorial, p. 12.

[185] The Daily Herald cried cut that "peace at any price, as long as the Czech paid for it is a revolting conception" Daily Herald, 17 September, 1938. Leader, p. 8.

[186] Cabinet Conclusions, 24 September, 1938. Cabinet 43(38), CAB 23/95.

Even so the majority of the Cabinet still moved in the direction of acquiescence, a direction away from what the public opinion in Britain was perceived to be. Now there may be certain broad reasons for this, amongst which is certainly the strong influence of the military factor. It is also possible that the political elite allowed itself to be persuaded more by opinion in the Empire rather than in the Isles itself.[187] From 15 September onwards, the Dominion High Commissioners were consulted daily by Malcolm MacDonald, the Dominions Secretary and, according to Middlemas,

> MacDonald's reports were sent direct to the Prime Minister's private office, where these consultations were deemed to be of great importance. They helped to mould the attitude of mind in which the Godesberg diktat was received....[188]

A summary of these conversations, found in the files of this period, states,

> The main point emerging from these conversations is the unanimous opinion of the Dominion representatives that, although the most favourable terms possible should be obtained for the Czechs, the issue was not one which justified a World War and the German Terms should be accepted in preference to war.[189]

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[187] It is perhaps in this respect that a statement of Ida Chamberlain, the P.M.'s sister, who knew him better than most contemporaries, asssumes relevance. Writing in 1951, she claimed that the attitude of the Dominions was "all important and absolutely ignored by those who now condemn." Ovendale, op. cit., p. 4.

[188] Keith Middlemas, Diplomacy of Illusion (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1972), p. 360.

[189] F.O. Minute, 29 September, 1938. C 10938/5304/18 (21777).

The attitude of the Dominions was referred to rather extensively in Cabinet meetings from the 25th onwards, at roughly the same time when domestic public opinion, as expressed in the British press, had become somewhat more aggressive. This conflict between opinion at home and in the Dominions found an echo in the differences in the Cabinet over how to respond to Hitler's humiliating Godesberg demands. The very people stating that the domestic pressures mattered to proclaimed that Dominion opinion need not be heeded; whilst the 'acquiescent' majority, which sought support in the pacific Dominion mood, preferred to play down the strength of feeling in the British press. Duff Cooper, who had feared an "explosion" in opinion at home asserted he would not attach too much importance to the Dominions. This was not acceptable to Chamberlain who felt that the anti-war sentiment of the Dominion High Commissioners should be given its due weight. The High Commissioners stated Malcolm MacDonald, were definitely of the view that "it would be very difficult to go to war on an issue concerned with method and not one with principle." Morrison, another member of the 'acquiescent' majority, doubted very much that the British public would react strongly to an acceptance of

Hitler's Godesberg terms.[190]

The factor of public opinion thus has a rather complex connection with the political elite's 'acquiescent' orientation during the fourth phase. Had only domestic public opinion been in question, the evidence would have gone against one of our basic hypotheses, viz elite risk-taking varies proportionately with changes in the public mood. But in this case, domestic public opinion was only part of the overall factor, the other portion being opinion in the Dominions. In other phases, both types of opinion had followed the same direction. In the fourth phase, the opposite directions they followed makes it difficult to state definitely the linkage between the independent and dependent variables . All we can say is that public opinion was not an insignificant factor in the elite calculations. Military Strength was a more powerful factor and so was the factor of environmental hostility, to which we shall now turn.

Environmental Hostility: The threat from the international environment gradually grew during this phase. It was a threat of a rather complex character, emanating as much from Germany as from France's connnection with Czechoslovakia.

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[190] These various opinions were expressed at the Cabinet meeting of 25 September, 1938. Cabinet Conclusions, 25 September, 1938. Cabinet 44(38). CAB 23/95. But this was not the only meeting where Dominion opinion had a significant role to play. Ovendale writes, "on the crucial day of 27 September, Chamberlain and the majority of the Cabinet seem to have been swayed by this consideration." Ovendale, op. cit., p. 180. D.C. Watt takes a similar view. D.C. Watt, "The Commonwealth and Munich," Personalities and Politics ed. D.C. Watt (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1967), pp. 169-174.

The Foreign Office, as we shall see, had become convinced sometime in August that Hitler had decided to use force to resolve the Sudeten Issue. Accordingly, it had felt that only a strident, unambiguous warning could make Hitler reverse this decision. The political elite was initially uncertain about the matter. On 24th August, Chamberlain was reported to have concluded that Hitler had decided to attack Czechoslovakia, shortly after the Nuremberg Party Conference, roundabout the 15th of September.[191] On 30th August, at the special meeting of the Ministers, Chamberlain, however, expressed doubts that Hitler's mind had been made up.[192] Even as late as 12th September, he was writing

> We are daily subjected to a perfect barrage of reports. Many of these reports (and of such authority as to make it impossible to dismiss them as unworthy of attention) declare positively that Hitler has made up his mind to attack Czechoslovakia on some date during this month after the 20th... Against this view, Henderson steadily maintains that Hitler has not made up his mind to violence.. with these contradictory views before us we are at present on the basis of the latter and more optimistic forecast.[193]

The statement linking British foreign policy behavior to

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[191] Minute by Sargent, 30 August, 1938. C 9041/1941/18 (21734).
[192] Minutes of Ministerial Meeting, 30 August, 1938. CAB 23/94.
[193] Note by Chamberlain, 12 September, 1938. PREM 1/265.

"the latter and more optimistic forecast" is interesting. The latter statement did not mean that hostility did not exist, but simply that it had not become definitive. The behavior referred to consisted, as we know, of a refusal to give an explicit warning to Hitler on the one hand and on the other, of intensified pressure on Czehoslovakia to make the wide-ranging concessions to its Sudeten minority. This low risk-taking behavior must be interpreted, in the environmental context, as an effort by Britain's political elite to prevent environmental hostility from reaching a certain critical point, i.e., the point where Hitler's mind might be made up and negotiations would be impossible. In other words, the effort was to prevent enviromental hostility from becoming an indisputable, universally accepted fact that might narrow down the range of choices for Britain. Had it been otherwise, Chamberlain might have found it difficult to initiate his talks with Hitler. After the Berchtesgaden meeting, of course, Hitler's hostility assumed a definitive character, which no amount of wishfulness could whitewash. Chamberlain returned convinced that Hitler was ready to go to war over the Sudeten Issue.[194] As regards the Sudeten Germans, he reported to the Cabinet, Hitler had said, "they wanted to come in. They must come in. If they were not allowed to come in, he would run the risk of a world war in order to bring them in."[195] This threat had to be received in the light of the breakdown in Czech-Sudeten negotiations and the collapse of the Runciman mission. With environmental hostility as an open, accepted fact, the other factors were thrown into sharper focus. Primarily, attention became focused on the military factor. Had the political elite seen the military situation in a more favourable light it might have decided on an 'intransigent' course at this point. As it was the 'acquiescent' trend became more prominent from now on.

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[194] Cabinet Conclusions, 17 September, 1938. Cabinet 39(38). CAB 23/95.

While not a key variable for the political elite, issue salience did have a curious effect on the importance of other variables, especially the political elite's perception of environmental hostility. On 27 September, 1938, Chamberlain still saw the Sudeten Issue as involving a little-known people living in a far-off country.[196] It was France in which Britain was vitally interested and it was the French connection that had forced Britain to take an interest in Czechoslovakia. During the 'promotive' phase, the apparently strong commitment of France to Czechoslovakia had raised the risk-taking propensity of the political elite. During the fourth phase, the weakening attitude of France served to further depress this risk-taking propensity in the British political elite. This weakening was by no means consistent and the erratic behavior of the political elite in the first few days regarding a warning to Germany in some way reflected this. On the one hand, France would tell Britain that she would press upon Czechoslovakia any solution that Runciman thought appropriate On the other hand, she would express a seemingly earnest desire that the democracies stand up to Hitler. It was not until 13 September, 1938 that it appeared to the British Ambassador in Paris that the French will had obviously snapped. He found the French Foreign Minister, Bonnet, referring to the German might in a panic-stricken way and repeatedly urging for the preservation of peace at any price.[197] He found the French Prime Minister, Daladier, desperately searching for a way to disengage his counry from her Central European commitment.[198] It thus became clear to Britain's political elite that France could now be only Czechoslovakia's most reluctant ally.[199] This recognition deepened its own acquiescence.

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[195] Ibid.

[196] The Times, 28 September, 1938.

Since environmental hostility has been assumed to be a function of the definitivenes of the Nazi threat and the strength of the French connection, and since, in the first half of the fourth phase, the former was believed to grow and the latter seen to fluctuate, it is somewhat difficult to estimate environmental hostility during this half. All that is clear is that risk-taking in this period, though a little erratic, assumed a basically low value. A link is discerned between the Nazi threat and risk-taking propensity. As the threat increased in definitiveness, risk-taking propensity decreased. There also seems to be a link between the strength of the French connection and risk-taking propensity, i.e. as the French connection grew weaker, risk-taking propensity grew less. Since, however, hostility cannot be properly estimated, its influence on the elite risk-taking propensity is a matter of conjecture. Perhaps the matter is somewhat confounded by the fact that an inverse relationship also seems to have existed between the definitiveness of the Nazi threat and the strength of the French connection. Perhaps, at this point, French enthusiasm for her Treaty as a subjective measure of environmental hostility had to acknowledge the difficulty of breaking the Treaty, even if she wanted to. This question had not arisen earlier. For one, France had shown little inclination to actually move in that direction. For another, the Nazi threat had not shown itself in the manner it did in the latter half of September, 1938. In the first half, when both factors were in a state of transition, assessment was difficult. The difficulty was, however, resolved when the French connection became quiescent. At this point, the Nazi threat became more certain and the hostility of the environment was seen to increase. Risk-taking propensity appeared to decrease even further as the 'acquiescent' character of the phase became more established.

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[197] Phipps to Halifax, Tel. 246, 13 September, 1938. C 9708/1941/18 (21737).
[198] Phipps to Halifax, Savingram No. 579, 8 September, 1938. C9402/36/17.
[199] Inskip expressed this feeling well when he wrote, "Everything showed that the French didn't want to fight, were not fit to fight and would'n fight."

SUMMARY

This chapter has shown quite conclusively that the policy orientation of the political elite was not stable during the period in question and that in fact, it fluctuated with the risk-taking displayed by the elite. When the overall risk-taking level was low, the policy phase was 'preservative' (as in phases I and III); when it was medium, the policy phase was 'promotive' (as in the phase II); and when the risk-taking level became very low, the corresponding policy phase was 'acquiescent' (as phase IV). In asking ourselves why a particular level of risk-taking was evidenced at a particular time and why fluctuations occurred, we have focused on four variables, each seen by the political elite through an ideological screen. Of these variables, political stability has had little or no impact on the present case. Of the other three variables - military strength (weakness), public opinion and environmental hostility - the linkage pattern has emerged as follows:

In phase I, military weakness was a powerful factor and found support in the factor of public opinion. Environmental hostility was played down by the political elite.

In phase II, military weakness and public opinion still

created 'preservative' pressures but the perceived increase in environmental hostility was enough to offset them and induce a 'promotive' stance in the political elite.
In phase III, the perceived decrease in environmental hostility meant the counter-pressure on the factors of military weakness and public opinion was removed and a 'preservative' orientation displayed once again by the political elite.

In phase IV, military weakness still continued to act as an influence for low risk-taking. It found extremely effective reinforcement in the increase in environmental hostility, both on the objective and subjective planes. So effective was the combination that even a contrary pressure by domestic public opinion, weak at first but mounting in strength gradually, failed to halt the slide in risk-taking. The 'acquiescent' phase and the infamous Munich surrender was the result.

CHAPTER IV

THE BUREAUCRATIC PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt the annexation of Austria by Hitler in 1938 came as a rude blow to the British Government. From being a distant prospect, confrontation with Germany became a distinct possibility. The threat arose less from Britain's inability to disavow an interest in Central Europe than from the French commitment to Czechoslovakia. If Hitler had a future target, it probably was Czechoslovakia. If France became involved in a war to defend her, Britain might find it hard to stand aside. This chapter deals with with bureaucratic reaction in Britain to this patently new situation in the international system. Our basic contention regarding the bureaucratic elite may be presented in the following schema:

TABLE 7

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            Independent      Intervening          Dependent
             Variable         Variable             Variable

International
    Structure---.
                |                                    POLICY
                |-------------> RISK-TAKING ------->
                |                                    OUTPUT
      Issue     |
    Salience----'
```

Throughout the period under study, the British Foreign Office, as we shall show, maintained a 'promotive' orientation towards the Czechoslovak Question.

As mentioned in the analytical framework, a nation's bureaucratic elite will, broadly speaking, have a conservative outlook. Its respect for international structure works against violent fluctuations in risk-taking. It is more procedure oriented, more conscious of precedent and less ready to adapt itself to environmental changes than the political elite. It is peculiarly sensitive to the international implications of what might appear to be essentially domestic issues and it will endeavour to contain such issues before they become a threat to the international system. We hypothesize that

> 1) Respect for international structure, reinforced by a conservative outlook, makes for moderate risk-taking and a primarily 'promotive' stance amongst the bureaucratic elite. The greater the flux in the international system, the more the bureaucratic elite tends to press for means to control it.
>
> 2) The bureaucratic elite is more sensitive to the international implications of domestic issues. The more an issue is perceived to have the potential to upset the system, the more the bureaucratic elite tends to opt for a 'promotive' role.

In this chapter, we intend to explore these hypotheses. Doing so will, by definition, lead us to highlight the primarily 'promotive' orientation of the bureaucratic elite of Britain and the moderate risk-taking propensity that inspired it. We will show that amongst the independent variables discussed in the introductory Chapter, the two which had the greatest impact on the bureaucratic elite were respect for international structure and issue salience. While this is the case, the other variables will not be ignored but discussed when the need arises.

In line with the organizational structure followed in discussing the political elite, our first task will be to understand the manner in which the bureaucratic elite defined the overall situation. In doing this, we focus particularly on its image of the in the European system (especially Germany) and its basic beliefs as to how the challenges presented by these nations could best be met. It should be pointed out once again that having looked at the general orientation, we will turn immediately to a discussion of its Risk-Taking Propensity and Causal Factors. This is done in the interest of brevity as the bureaucratic elite's behavior during the March-September 1938 period was consistently 'promotive'.

BASIC POLICY OUTLOOK : A Background Note

Some members of the Foreign Office, of whom Sir Robert Vansittart (Chief Diplomatic Adviser and erstwhile Permanent Under-Secretary) and Sir Orme Sargent (the Assistant Under-Secretary) were predominant, were basically anti-German, believing German expansionism to be primarily responsible for the volatility of the European system, recognizing but not accepting German territorial ambitions in Eastern Europe and doubting whether a permanent reconciliation with Germany was at all possible. As early as 1930, Vansittart had written of his conviction that Germany would persistently work for union with Austria, recovery of her colonial territories, annexation of the so-called Polish Corridor and increased rearmament. [1] The advent of Hitler, whom he descibed as a "half-mad and ridiculously dangerous demagogue," only increased his apprehensions on the score. "The present regime in Germany," he wrote worriedly, "will, on past and present form, loose off another European war just as soon as it feels strong enough.." [2]

Yet Vansittart was unable to suggest a policy commensurate with his strong feelings on the matter. He could recommend that Britain cultivate closer relations with Russia and France, but he did not suggest that a military alliance take place between them. He could toy with the idea of a preventive war but he did not advocate it to the Cabinet. [3] The only policy that he strove for, clearly and unambiguously, was the Mediterranean policy which centred around a preservation of Italian friendship and where the element of intransigence was manifest only by implication. [4] The only consistent strain discernible in his policy towards Germany was that of a limited equity. In 1931, inspired by what Gilbert has called the Sargent Chain he called for a policy based on "enlightened self-interest." The Sargent chain ran thus:

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[1] Quoted in Ian Colvin, Vansittart in Office, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1965), p. 19.
[2] Ibid., p. 23.
[3] Ibid., p. 24.
[4] Ibid., p. 23.

> World recovery (the aim of our policy) depends on European recovery; European recovery on German recovery; German recovery on France's consent; France's consent on security (for all time) against attack. The chain is simple to envisage, but so difficult to link together. [5]

Feeling that German recovery was the key link in the chain, Vansittart advocated concessions to Germany that would take the edge off German grievances and prevent their aspirations from becoming demands. Specifically, he suggested that Germany be permitted a limited rearmament both in the air and on the ground and naval parity with France at sea. He also felt that the prohibition on conscription imposed on her at Versailles be lifted. There was no mention of the German economic and territorial grievances. [6] The proposals, with their combination of revisionism and firmness, were made with the distinct idea of moving the international environment in the direction of peace. Vansittart's reluctance to take a strong line against Germany over the Rhineland matter may also be mentioned. [7] Following his visit to Hitler in 1936, he propagated the idea of colonial concessions being used as an inducement to a general East European settlement. [8] At the most, such a settlement, he felt would be an "Act of Faith;" at the least, it would give Britain time to catch up with Germany in the arms race.

There were other members of the Foreign Office who were not so anti-German as Vansittart and Sargent. Of these, the most important, from the point of view of this study were the Permanent Under-Secretary after early 1938, Sir Alexander Cadogan and the Head of the crucial Central Section, William Strang. The Permanent Under-Secretary did not hold such a black view of Germany. [9] He did not believe that anyone could tell with the definitiveness of Vansittart what the German ambitions were. He doubted whether they extended to a territorial hegemony of Eastern Europe, preferring to believe that German ambitions in the East would be limited to economic hegemony. Even if this were not so, Germany would likely not bother the West. He rated the chances of reaching a modus vivendi with her as somewhat higher than did Vansittart, but his assessment was not confidently made. [10] Even less sanguine than Cadogan, Strang was, however, temperamentally incapable of sympathizing with the "uncompromising" views held by officials like Vansittart. [11] Yet both of them wanted to buy time, Cadogan perhaps even more so than Strang. "If everyone in Germany is mad, if all are bent on destruction," said Cadogan, admitting the possiblity that his appreciation of Germany might be wrong, "disaster must come. Therefore, the best we can do is to put it off. Therefore, we must try and talk with some of them and encourage some of them..."[12] It was in this spirit that he, for example, following the violation of Rhineland by Hitler, suggested that a deliberate attempt be made to revise the Versailles Agreement in order to preempt Germany's further violation of its provisions and thus keep some control over the international system.[13] In 1935, therefore, Cadogan, with a mellower image of Germany was essentially suggesting what Vansittart did in 1931. Strang's image of the situation is revealed for example in a minute he wrote in February 1937:

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[5] Gilbert, The Roots of Appeasement, op. cit., p. 131.
[6] Ibid., p. 132.
[7] Colvin, op. cit., pp. 101-102.
[8] Ibid., pp. 110-111.

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[9] D. Dilks (ed.), The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan (London: Cassell, 1971), p. 29.
[10] Cadogan Diaries, pp. 14-15.
[11] W. Strang, Home and Abroad, (London: Andre Deutsch, 1956), p. 121.

> Every month gained for peace is to our advantage if only we will use it. It is for this reason that a bilateral German-Czech agreement has always seemed to be a thing to be wished for. The Germans are probably not in a strong enough position internationally to get it all their own way in such a negotiation...[14]

Thus, though neither shared Vansittart's conviction that both Italy and Russia could be used to exert a restraining influence upon Germany - Cadogan was anti-Russian[15] and Strang anti-Italian,[16] all felt, in varying degrees, that Germany should be handled with a mixture of firmness and generosity.

Whereas a fair section of the Foreign Office was anti-German and the majority were, like Cadogan and Strang, only suspicious of Germany, a minority (of which the foremost example was Neville Henderson)[17] felt that reconciliation with Germany was necessary in order to restrain Russian intrigues, Japanese ambitions and Italian aspirations. These countries, they felt, were of greater danger to British imperial interests than Germany was. They felt, unlike those who emphasized a fair deal with Germany, that German goodwill ought to and could be bought. One way this could be done was to give Germany a free hand in Eastern Europe. Another would be through the generous grant of colonial concessions. Thus, whereas, one school favoured the judicious grant of concessions to the Germans, the other school favoured a dramatic, indiscrimate revision of the Versailles Treaty. The former view prevailed. Its object and the object of the Foreign Office generally, as Strang put it was

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[12] Cadogan Diaries, p. 14.
[13] Cadogan Diaries, pp. 12-13.
[14] Minute by Strang, 13 February, 1937. R 968/26/27 (21136).
[15] Cadogan Diaries, p. 53.
[16] Strang, op. cit., p. 65.

> to keep the situation as steady as we can without bringing ourselves face to face with war. Confusion would result from any sudden plunge into a new policy of open undertakings to make concessions to Germany.[18]

To summarize, the following beliefs were critical in the ideological profile of Britain's bureaucratic elite in 1938:

1) Accomodation with Hitler, though not impossible, is open to doubt.
2) Hitler's expansionist tendencies increased the

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[17] British Ambassador in Berlin. His views, spread over a large number of dispatches, are most succinctly presented in his memorandum, "British Policy Towards Germany," 10 May, 1937. C 5316/270/18 (20736).
[18] Minute by Strang, 28 July, 1937. C 5316/270/18 (20736).

probability of war.
3) Only a judicious firmness could work with Hitler.
4) He should not be allowed a free hand in East Europe.
5) Britain can cultivate the allies necessary for a forward diplomacy.

Having briefly examined the bureaucratic definition of the overall situation, we now turn to an analysis of its foreign policy behaviour in 1938 vis-a-vis the Sudeten Issue.

NATURE OF POLICY ORIENTATION

The ruthlessness displayed by Germany in achieving her Austrian ambitions left its mark on the bureaucratic elite. The following minute was typical:

> The Austrian business shows that while the Nazi ultimate program remains unchanged, the steps which may be taken to realize it will depend upon opportunity and circumstances. The moral would seem to be that we should do what we can to prevent the opportunity for further steps arising by, on the one hand, smoothing away grievances and on the other, showing our interest in European affairs." [19]

The attitude revealed in this minute is evident not only in other individual memoranda but also in an important memorandum collectively prepared in March, 1938, at the Cabinet's behest, for the latter's consideration. [20]

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[19] F.O. Minutes, 28 March, 1938. C 2113/132/18 (21764).
[20] F.O. Memorandum on "Possible Measures to Avert German Action in Czechoslovakia," 18 March, 1938. Appendix I, F.P. (36) 26th mtg. CAB 27/623. Hereto, referred to as March Memorandum.

The March Memorandum: The memorandum began with three basic assumptions:

1) Incorporation of the Sudeten areas was the eventual goal of the Reich with an autonomous regime therein a possible intermediate goal. The other main goal was the reduction of Czechoslovakia to a status of neutrality.

2) Henlein, the Sudeten Leader, was suspected of being in the Nazi pay and although the entire German minority in Czechoslovakia was not as yet behind him, the pull of the Reich upon the population was expected to increase.

3) The occupation of Austria by the Nazi forces had made Czechoslovakia more vulnerable since the latter's border with Austria was not fortified in the manner the Czechoslovak-German border was. In addition, German control of Czechoslovakia's sea route could expose her to economic blackmail. In short, the latter had suddenly became vulnerable.

Starting from these assumptions of German aggressiveness, Sudeten dissatisfaction and Czechoslovak vulnerability, the memorandum stated that the only way German aggressiveness could be halted would be by measures that would simultaneously lower the Sudeten dissatisfaction and reduce Czechoslovakia's vulnerability. How Sudeten dissatisfaction could be reduced was a difficult question and could most appropriately be dealt with only by an International Commission which Czechoslovakia could not possibly refuse. The question of Czechoslovakia's security was an even more vexing one and the Foreign Office could only see three courses open. One was the Grand Alliance of anti-German European states suggested by Winston Churchill in the House of Commons on 14th March 1938. Manifesting an 'intransigent' approach, in terms of our definition, this was deemed an attractive proposal. There were decisive objections to it, however. The Grand Alliance could not be made operational without a treaty; the treaty would take long to negotiate and time was of crucial importance. The second course suggested by the memorandum went to the other extreme, evidencing what was clearly an 'acquiescent' approach. It was to give Czechoslovakia no commitments whatsoever, but rather to persuade her to make the best terms she could with Germany. The emphasis would be on altering Germany's negotiating position by weakening the Rome-Berlin Axis through intensified efforts to draw Italy away. The French interest in Czechoslovakia would be ignored and France clearly told that the guarantee under the Locarno treaty would apply only in the event of unprovoked aggression by Germany. Following such a course, one would have to accept an unpalatable deterioration of Anglo-French relations and risk a possibly dangerous rapprochement between France and Germany.

The third or middle course, the one the Foreign Office favoured, was to give an indirect and conditional commitment to Czechoslovakia. This approach was, in terms of our definition, 'promotive'. It was typically expressed by a

Foreign Office official as follows:

> We cannot safely adopt the policy of here and now declaring our neutrality in any conflict which may arise out of Germany's expansionist aims (which is what the Germans would like us to do) nor to go to the other extreme, the policy of preventive war (which is what some people in France rather hanker after)." [21]

The British offer of assistance would apply to France and apply only if she were attacked by Germany in the course of fulfilling her treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia. There would be two conditions attached; one, that Czechoslovakia satisfy Britain with respect to the treatment of the Sudeten minority. And two, that France obtain Britain's approval before going to Czechoslovakia's assistance. It was with reference to the first condition that the proposed International Commission would play an important role. Britain would study the recommendations of such a Commision and should she find them satisfactory, privately obtain Czechoslovakia's assent to their implementation and then publicly, undertake to defend them by force, if necessary. In short, Germany would have to contend with Britain should she find these recommendations out of line with her plans. The condition concerning France, while not insuring complete control for Britain, would go a long way towards vesting her with the power to decide between war and peace.

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[21] F.O. Minutes, 6 May, 1938. C 3600/42/18 (21657).

The Promotive Criteria: The bureaucratic elite saw Britain faced with two objectives as far as Czechoslovakia was concerned. One objective was expressed in the following words:

> Do we consider that the break-up of the present Czechoslovak state is inevitable, and do we therefore aim at ensuring by agreement with Germany that this break-up and subsequent disposal of territory involved shall be effected smoothly and without bloodshed? [22]

This objective unabashedly accepted Czechoslovakia as a pawn in big power politics in which the big powers made all the moves and the little powers accepted them. It was an objective characteristic of an 'acquiescent' posture. As we have seen, it dominated the thinking of the British political elite in September, 1938. It was, however, not an objective that the Whitehall bureaucracy, with its respect for international structure and conservative ideology, could have accepted. "It is difficult," it argued, "to see how we can advise the Czechoslovak Goverment to commit suicide on the grounds that we believe that sooner or later she is going to be murdered." [23]

The second objective was expressed as follows:

> Do we consider that the present Czechoslovak state can be preserved if it so reforms itself as to remove any colourable pretext for interference which Germany can at present advance? By this means, even if Germany's ambition remains

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[22] F.O. Memorandum on "The German-Czechoslovak Question: Considerations of Policy," 21 April, 1938. C 3868/1941/18 (21717).
[23] Ibid.

> unsatisified, at any rate her ultimate policy of breaking up the present state - if it is a policy - will be delayed and hindered." [24]

This was the objective that the Foreign Office favoured. To delay, if not to prevent the crisis from peaking, was its aim. It was not a 'preservative' aim, it did not advocate Britain's retreat into an isolationist shell. It was not an 'intransigent' aim because it specifically spoke of reform. It was very clearly a 'promotive' point of view that the Foreign Office expressed. This becomes even more clear in the criteria the Foreign Office stated should be applied to any scheme for solving the Sudeten Problem.

The first criterion was a more or less obvious one: How far would the proposed scheme represent "an agreement between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten minority?" [25] The second criterion provided a greater insight into Foreign Office thinking: whether, and if so, how far, the proposed scheme "endangered the continued integrity of the Czechoslovak state?" [26] Concessions by Czechoslovakia which were clearly inadequate, would conflict with the first criterion; concessions which were dangerous to Czechoslovakia, would conflict with the second criterion. In either case, the scheme would be unreasonable. A reasonable scheme, according to Whitehall, would firstly have to include concessions considered adequate by the British Government and consonant with the integrity of the Czechoslovakian state.[27] In short, it had to satisfy the second criterion. It might or might not be acceptable to the Sudeten Germans and thus might or might not hold the promise of an amicable agreement. It therefore might or might not safisfy the first criterion. would resolve the impending crisis in a manner satisfactory to all. But if it did not, and the Foreign Office feared it would not, Britain would be obliged to step in "if we wish to convert the scheme into a settlement."[28] In stepping in, Britain would not only have to tell the Sudeten Germans not to make unrealistic demands, but also warn their Reich cousins that any war over the matter would inevitably involve Britain.

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.

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[27] The Foreign Office was against asking Germany to specify her demands, a step which the Foreign Office was inclined to favour. It felt that such a step would only encourage German intransigence. Hitler might snub Britain either by ignoring her request or claiming she was meddling in a matter she did not understand and which was, in any case, a family affair. Alternatively, he might formulate an outrageous scheme and leave Britain to present it to Czechoslovakia. Should she do so, she would be acting contrary to the policy guideline of limiting herself to advocating such measures as will not endanger the independence and integrity of the present state." cf. F.O. Memorandum on "Considerations of Policy," op. cit. Should she not do so, Anglo-German relations would certainly worsen. It could not be ruled out that Hitler might answer any British approach with a superficially reasonable scheme and suggest that the Czechoslovak Government be urged to accept it. This would be contrary, however, to the favoured Foreign Office strategy of pronouncing independently on a scheme emanating from Prague and recommending that to Germany. Such a strategy, it was felt, would inform Hitler more than any other that Britain meant business.

[28] Ibid.

Of the various schemes considered by the Foreign Office, the major ones were a Sudeten plebiscite, Czechoslovak neutrality, Sudeten autonomy and Mediation.[29] We shall see how the 'promotive' criteria applied to them.

Plebiscite: According to the Foreign Office files, the notion of a plebiscite in the Sudeten Areas was first raised in March 1938 by Lord Noel-Buxton.[30] In a memorandum submitted simultaneously to Chamberlain, Halifax, Cadogan and Vansittart, he contended that war could only be avoided if the wishes of the Sudetens were ascertained in a formal manner. It was unreasonable, he argued, for Britain to involve herself in war "in order to preserve Czech sovereignity over these Germans"[31] unless the latter clearly wanted that state of affairs. The Foreign Office was very definitely against the idea.[32] It argued, firstly, that the atmosphere was not conducive to a plebiscite. Nazi propaganda and the force of recent events would preclude the plebiscite from being the expression of an honest opinion. Secondly, it argued that a plebiscite would be pandering to "an artificially created craze for racial theory."[33] There were limits to the application of the principle of self-determination and in Czechoslovakia's case, these limits were defined by economic and geographical needs, as had indeed been recognized by the framers of the Peace Treaty of 1919. Thirdly, stated the Foreign Office, the Czechs would themselves hardly welcome the idea. They had indeed accepted British interest in the problem, but radical suggestions like a plebiscite would only serve to get their backs up. Though not stated formally until the following month, the integrity criterion was clearly apparent in the Foreign Office arguments.

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[29] Among the minor schemes considered by the Foreign Office were
1) a scheme for the exchange of recalcitrant minorities between Germany and Czechoslovakia, which in effect would expel the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia. It was a scheme which played down the salience of the Sudeten Issue and was consequently rejected.
2) a scheme for direct negotiations between the Czechs and the Germans which offended the bureaucratic respect for international structure since it would mean negotiations between vastly unequal powers.
3) a call for arbitration of the Sudeten Issue. This was rejected on the grounds that it could not be legally invoked, as the Sudeten dispute was not formally admitted by Germany as a dispute between herself and Czechoslovakia.
4) a public expression of support for the Sudeten cause. This conflicted with the integrity criteria and thus offended the bureaucratic respect for international structure.

[30] Memorandum by Lord Noel-Buxton, 18 March, 1938. C 1957/1941/18 (21712).

[31] Ibid.

On 3rd June, 1938, the Times published a leader somewhat similar to the more notorious one of 7 September. Arguing for a plebiscite, a course which it claimed "the majority of Englishman probably agree with,"[34] it stated that even if it meant a cession of Sudetenland from

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[32] F.O. Minutes, 25 March - 1 April, 1938. C 1957/1941/ 18 (21712).
[33] Ibid.
[34] The Times, (London), 3 June, 1938.

Czecholsovakia, the latter would not be a loser. It would have a more homogenous and contented people, still more numerous than the populations of Belgium and Holland twice as numerous than the populations of Denmark and Switzerland. The argument did not appeal to the Foreign Office. It thought the Times "insane" to write such a leader. [35] It was especially irritated by the latter's bad timing. The leader was written shortly after the May Crisis, when Hitler was smarting from what was widely regarded as a diplomatic defeat and the Czechs were in a somewhat self-gratulatory and inflammable mood. Identified as the Times was with the decision-making elite in Britain, its comments, the Foreign Office feared, would encourage hardliners in the Czech Army, cause a backlash amongst the Czech people and unnecessarily cause Henlein to inflate his demands.

The Foreign Office insistence on Czechoslovak integrity was, however, not blind or unthinking. It saw the matter not from an 'intransigent', but from a 'promotive' perspective. Its concern for Czechoslovakia was not because of any great belief in the viability of the country as it stood, but because it appeared to hold the greatest promise in the uncertain times and in the absence of a strong British policy, of a peaceful, equitable solution.

The following minute, written in June, typifies this :

We are at present seeking a solution of the Czech

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[35] F.O. Minutes, 4 June, 1938. C 5359/1941/18 (21723).

> problem which will preserve the integrity of Czechoslovakia. If present negotiations fail, and the Sudetens ask for a plebiscite, we may be forced to entertain the possibility of a frontier revision as a means of averting a settlement by force. We do not, however, want to say so yet.[36]

Neutrality: If the plebiscite alternative dealt with a change of Czechoslovakia's internal structure, the neutrality alternative concerned itself with changing her international status. If the British Ambassador in Berlin was a protagonist of the former, the British Minister to Prague was strongly in favour of the latter. As Newton saw it,[37]

> Czechoslovakia's internal difficulties could not be resolved until her external relations could be conducted on lines inoffensive to Germany. No concession that Czechoslovakia might make would be properly appreciated by Germany as long as the former remained in what was perceived as a hostile camp. A declaration of neutrality, however, would change Germany's overall attitude, reduce her suspiciousness, ease tension generally and create a suitable atmosphere for talks.

The bureaucratic elite was initially lukewarm to the idea.[38] A declaration by Czechoslovakia of her neutrality might very well contribute to a solution of her internal problem, but neutrality itself would be meaningless unless Germany undertook to respect it. It was feared that she would not do so "except in return for such concessions to the Sudeten Germans as would destroy the present character of the Czechoslovak state and reduce her to a kind of vassal of Germany."[39] A neutrality based on a pious hope of German goodwill would be an invitation to disorder. Britain desired the solution of the Sudeten problem that would not push Czechoslovakia into Germany's arms. Britain, therefore, could hardly advise Czechoslovakia to abandon her treaty relations without simultaneously suggesting a suitable security substitute. "In the absence of any foreign guarantee, Czechoslovakia could not fail, situated as she was, to become a vassal of Germany."[40]

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[36] F.O. Minutes, 14 June, 1938. C 5888/1941/18 (21724).

[37] Newton to Halifax, Tel. No. 68 Saving, 11 April, 1938. C 2989/1941/18 (21715).

[38] F.O. Minutes, 14 April, 1938. C 2989/1941/18 (21715).

Apart from Czechoslovakia's natural reluctance to rely on Germany's goodwill alone for her continued existence, France and Russia would almost certainly refuse to suffer the "gratuitous humiliation" of urging Czechoslovakia to leave them merely in order to propitiate Germany."[41] "If we make this concession," argued Sargent, "we (i.e. France, Russia and ourselves) are entitled, to put it cynically, to ask something tangible in return."[42] A pronounced 'promotive' strain manifested itself in this statement. Eventually, the Foreign Office came to favour neutrality after the Belgian model. It had the merit of suggesting neutrality for Czechoslovakia while retaining the French and

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[39] F.O. Memorandum on "Considerations of Policy," op. cit.
[40] Ibid.
[41] F.O. Minutes, 14 April, 1938. C 2989/1941/18 (21715).
[42] Ibid.

Russian guarantees of defence. It was one thing, however, to arrive at this conception of neutrality and another to persuade the parties involved, primarily Czechoslovakia and France, to receive it favourably. The bureaucratic elite, believing it necessary to maintain an even balance between these states on the one hand and Germany on the other, were reluctant to press the alternative upon the former. Further, as a Foreign Office minute in August stated, such pressure might provoke a situation that might result in a decisive rejection of neutrality.[43] Having thus produced the ball and thrown it into the French court, the British bureaucrats did nothing more. They tock solace in the thought that "when the time comes to consider this matter further, the French will at least have had every opportunity to form an opinion."[44]

Autonomy: In addition to the plebiscite and neutrality solutions, another solution that was intermittently debated in the Whitehall chambers was that of autonomy for the Sudeten areas. From the bureaucratic perspective, there was more to commend it than the plebiscite solution. In rejecting the latter, the Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Alexander Cadogan, had written towards the end of June: "It seems clear that autonomy within the Czechoslovak state must be our immediate aim."[45] A limited autonomy, recognizing the need of the Sudeten Germans to have some say in matters concerning themselves, was what Cadogan had in mind. A provincial autonomy, based upon a geographically separate area for the minority, was never favoured by the Foreign Office. Such an autonomy, it was felt, would endanger the internal structure of the state. "I do not think we are entitled," wrote the Assistant Permanent Under-Secretary in April, 1938, "knowing what we do and suspecting what we suspect to urge federalism upon the Czechoslovak Government."[46]

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[43] F.O. Minutes, 12 August, 1938. C 8128/1941/18 (21731).
[44] Ibid.

Even the limited version of autonomy, it was thought in March, 1938, needed to be guaranteed by the Big Powers (Britain included) to make it acceptable to the Czechoslovak Government and to make the Germans respect it. This condition was abandoned in face of the British Cabinet's reluctance to extend the scope of existing commitments. Limited autonomy, however, became an increasingly attractive solution because of the pressure of events and the lack of any other feasible, equitable solution. Nevertheless, limited autonomy remained a loose concept that the Foreign Office could never define with any certainty. Basically, as Strang put it, it meant "the enjoyment of the German way of life by the German population."[47] It certainly entailed a measure of municipal and educational self-administration. It, however, did not extend to the conversion of Czechoslovakia into a federation. When, during the course of their summer negotiations with the Czechoslovak Government, the Sudeten Germans raised the question of a separate Diet (Volkstag), the Foreign Office appreciated the Czech apprehensions. Such a Diet, said Benes, "would be incompatible with the constitution and endanger the unity of the country." [48] But the Foreign Office concluded that the mere idea of a Volkstag need not be the cause of such consternation if its functions could be satisfactorily limited. When, however, more details of the Sudeten proposal were forthcoming, the Foreign Office shed whatever sympathy it felt for the idea. It was felt that what the Sudetens wanted was "a reorganization of the whole country on what would be a caste system." [49] As such, the scheme would not only continuously threaten the basic structure of the state, it would also involve a prolongation of the racial tension in Czechoslovka. It could, therefore, hardly be pressed relentlessly on the country's government.

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[45] F.O. Minutes, 1 July, 1938. C 5888/1941/18 (21724).
[46] F.O. Minutes, 11 April, 1938. C2288/1941/18 (21714).
[47] F.O. Minutes, 9 May, 1938. C 4282/1941/18 (21719).

Mediation: In terms of our definition, the 'promotive' category is marked by a moderate to high degree of constructive, problem-solving involvement. A genuine mediation is a concrete manifestation of such an involvement. In March 1938, Jan Masaryk, the Czechoslovak Minister in London, was writing home that

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[48] Newton to Halifax, Tel. 265, 3 June, 1938. C 5391/1941/18 (21723).
[49] F.O. Minutes, 13-14 June, C 5692/1941/18 (21724).

> There (is) a growing tendency in British Government circles to assume a role of an intermediary between Czechoslovakia and Germany in order to remove the more immediate cause of friction as soon as possible.[50]

The circles that Masaryk was obviously referring to were those of the Foreign Office. The latter stood both for an early formal mediation in the issue and the exercise of even-handed pressure on the negotiating parties. It conflicted on both counts with the more cautious political elite.

The Foreign Office felt that mediation was the best assurance that the situation would not drift. "I can't help feeling," wrote the Assistant Under-Secretary in April, 1938, when negotiations between the Sudeten Germans and the Czechs had not yet begun, "that the presence of an impartial intermediary in Czechoslovakia at the present time might be very useful."[51] Sargent feared that neither the British Minister in Prague nor any other member of the delegation would be considered sufficiently impartial. He therefore wondered whether "it would not be possible to find some unofficial Englishman who enjoyed the confidence of both Henlein and Hodza and send him out privately to Prague on the chance of his being able to act as unofficial mediator."[52] Halifax, however, felt it was premature to think in terms of mediation, even though the idea sounded promising. "I think," he minuted, "the idea of a 'mediator' is worth keeping in mind, but I don't think we are quite there yet."[53]

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[50] F.O. Minutes, 1 April, 1938. C 2955/1941/18 (21715).
[51] F.O. Minutes, 30 April, 1938. C 3316/1941/18 (21716).

Because of the political elite's lack of enthusiasm for this open form of mediation and because of the beginning of negotiations between the Sudetens and the Czechs, the Foreign Office did not press the idea too strongly.[54]

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Intermittently during that summer, it certainly appeared to believe that the negotiations could succeed. Through Henlein's visit to London in May, 1938, it believed, "an opportunity had been created that should be exploited to its maximum." F.O. Minutes, 16 May, 1938. C 4505/1941/18 (21715). Henlein had not only informed the Foreign Office that his Karlsbad demands of the previous month had been pitched too high for tactical reasons but had also promised not to insist on those demands - such as reparations, neutrality and profession of German nationality and Nazi philosophy - that the Foreign Office had felt would be anathema to the Czechs. Moreover, the two sides were believed to have agreed on 23 May, 1938, that "the object of further negotiations must be to find a fundamental solution to the minority problem satisfactory to both parties." F.O. Minutes, 26 May, 1938. C 5260/1941/18 (21723) At Vansittart's insistence, the Sudeten negotiators had presented a modified version of their Karlsbad demands to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, Milan Hodza, and he had promised to consider these demands favourably. In fact, he had even presented the Sudeten negotiators with a "private" memorandum on the subject that had gone beyond the Czechoslovak position as known till then. Even as late as 7th July, Cadogan was writing, "We cannot force the pace; we must give the negotiations a chance, trust to coming in opportunely if they threaten to fail and hope to evolve a compromise ultimately." F.O. Minutes, 7 July, 1938. C 6600/1941/18 (21726).

A limited sanguinity about the negotiations, however, did not mean that the bureaucracy did not envisage and plan for a situation wherein they might fail. Should deadlock be reached and the situation threaten to get out of control, the best course for Britain, it thought, would be to set up an International Commission, consisting of representatives from France, Britain and some neutral countries, with the purpose of constructively mediating in the matter. [55] Such a concerted attempt, at mediation, evidencing as it did Britain's undisguised interest in the matter, however, was not particularly pleasing to her political leaders for whom Hitler's resentment of third party interference in the Sudeten Issue was an important negative factor. In March 1938, before he invaded Austria, Hitler had vehemently expressed this resentment to the British Ambassador [56] and none of Britain's political elite had forgotten this. What it rather favoured, as opposed to an International Commission, were secret conversations with Hitler, in which possibly the French Goverment could participate as well. [57] The Foreign Office, however, commented that such conversations would entail knowledge of the problem's technicalities which Britain could only secure through an unofficial mediator. [58] Britain's bureaucratic elite, one might rightfully say, kept returning to the idea of mediation in some form or the other should the negotiations not bear the promised fruit. "Having taken the initiative in this question," wrote the Head of the Central Section, "we cannot avoid becoming more and more deeply involved if we wish to use our full influence." [59]

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[55] F.O. Minutes, 19 July, 1938. C 7349/4786/18 (21769).
[56] F.O. Minutes, 5 March, 1938. C 1475/42/18 (21656).
[57] Minute by Halifax, 22 June, 1938. C 5297/1941/18 (21723).
[58] F.O. Minutes, 22 June, 1938. C 5297/1941/18 (21723).

In discussing these various alternatives, we have been concerned to show that Czechoslovak sensitivities weighed heavily with the Foreign Office and resulted in a marked reluctance to subject Prague to undue pressure. From the bureaucratic perspective, the only suitable solutions to the problem were a limited neutrality on the external front and a limited autonomy on the internal.

> We must work on the assumption, (ran a F. O. minute), that the object is to safeguard the integrity of Czechoslovakia. Otherwise, we might just as well admit a plebiscite. If this is so, we shall have to induce the Sudetens to modify those demands which threaten the integrity of the state and, in order to do so, shall have to get the Czechs to make concessions in other spheres. It is in this connection, that the possibility of readjusting Czechoslovakia's external relations may come in useful. [60]

The criteria enunciated by the Foreign Office in April, 1938, were applied by it with a remarkable consistency in pronouncing upon the various solutions to the Sudeten Problem proposed from time to time. The desire not to break

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[59] F.O. Minutes, 16 July, 1938.
[60] F.O. Minutes, 24 June, 1938. C 5922/1941/18 (21724).

Czechoslovakia's spirit, or to provoke her into a feeling of desperation, made the Foreign Office circumspect in any pressure it brought to bear on that country. It was the bureaucratic belief that the Czechs would be more amenable to persuasion, "if we take them along gradually, rather than if we scare them off the field of concession altogether." [61] Thus it was that in the various demarches that Britain made in Prague, the Foreign Office always pressed for some indication of British interest in an equitable soluton. This was, for example, the case with the demarche made in May, 1938. [62] In none of the three major demarches delivered in June, 1938 [63] did the Foreign Office recommend anything more than polite exhortations to the Czech Government to make such concessions as would be commensurate with the integrity of the state. It left it to the latter to decide what the concessions would be. Britain, it felt, had no right to press some particular solution upon her unless it could guarantee the solution itself. When the May Crisis brought about a state of quasi-mobilization in Czechoslovakia, the Foreign Office was reluctant to press Czech Government to demobilize. As a minute ran,

> ...to endeavour to prevent a small country in

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[61] F.O. Minutes, 3 May, 1938. C 3837/1941/18 (21717).

[62] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 68, 4 May, 1938. C 3837/1941/18 (21717).

[63] Halifax to Newton, Tel. 142, 31 May, 1938. C 5234/1941/18 (21722). Halifax to Newton, Tel. 157, 6 June, 1938. C 5518/1941/18 (21723). Halifax to Newton, Tel. 176, 22 June, 1938. C 6200/1941/18 (21725).

> danger of being attacked by a big one from doing what it considers necessary in self-defence would be to incur a hideous responsibility if things did go wrong - the advice would be impossible to justify unless we were prepared to undertake to guarantee the Czechs against the possible consequences.." 64

RISK-TAKING PROPENSITY : THE INTERVENING VARIABLE

Risk-taking involves the preparedness to undertake something, knowing full well that if the effort is successful, a desired goal is reached and that if it is not, an undesirable state of affairs will result. The willingness to be firm with Germany, even to the extent of threatening her, carried risk, the amount of risk being based on a subjective assessment of not only the positive and negative pay-offs involved but also the probability of negative pay-offs actually occurring. We shall first examine the general probability of negative pay-offs involving Germany, ie., the probability of her making war. We shall then examine the risks perceived in specific courses of action, both suggested and actualized. If our previous section highlighted the continuous 'promotive' approach of the bureaucratic elite to the Sudeten Problem *per se*, the present section will focus on its risk-taking propensity, which we hold to be moderate.

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64 F.O. Minutes, 14 June, 1938. C 5771/4786/18 (21769).

__The Possibility of War__: In a sense, the bureaucratic elite did not expect Germany to pass this point for some time to come. "I don't believe," wrote a Foreign Service Official, "that Germany is going to risk war about Czechoslovakia until her own armaments are further developed and until Austria is more thoroughly digested i.e. until 1940."[65] This was an opinion which found wide currency in the Foreign Office in the immediate aftermath of the Anschluss. Germany was not deemed to be ready for a large or long war. Thus the world had a kind of breathing space "which could be utilized in searching for a peaceful resolution of the Sudeten problem."[66] Doubts about German readiness for military actions continued being expressed throughout that summer. "Happily," wrote an official in June," the present indications are that Germany does not want to press matters to a point at which the use of force would become necessary."[67] A certain uneasiness, however, accompanied this assessment of Germany's intentions. This uneasiness was a result of Hitler's known unpredicability and doubts regarding his ability to control this situation completely. The first factor was apparent in remarks like the following:

> Herr Hitler only made up his mind to incorporate Austria in the Reich in the enthusiasm of the moment. Similar developments are not impossible in the case of Czechoslovakia at least as far as

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[65] Minute by Cresswell, 19 April, 1938. C 3068/1941/18 (21715).
[66] F.O. Minutes, 16 April, 1938. C 2777/1941/18 (21715).
[67] F.O. Minutes, 24 June, 1938. C 6108/1941/18 (21725).

Bohemia and Moravia are concerned.[68]

The second factor, not entirely unrelated to the first, found expression in statements like the following:

> One cannot help wondering whether Hitler's day to day control over his subordinates is close enough to prevent situations arising which, to some extent determine in advance the decision the Fuhrer will take.[69]

As the summer progressed this uneasiness grew, fed on sporadic reports that Hitler was planning a military coup in the fall. Though Hitler's military position was still not seen as overwhelmingly superior, the Foreign Office was forced to recognize that "the international situation, coupled with the culmination of the Sudeten negotiations in Prague, may well tempt the Nazi leaders during the military danger period August - October."[70]

It was only with von Kleist's mission in August, 1938 that the Foreign Office became convinced that the irrational had occurred and that Hitler had in fact decided to take by force whatever he wanted from Czechoslovakia. As we shall see, it was this recognition that led the Foreign Office to make redoubled efforts to contain Hitler through the medium of an explicit warning.

Conditional Commitment of March, 1938: The Foreign Office was aware that the course it recommended involved a certain amount of risk. It could very well involve Britain in a war earlier rather than later since

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[68] F.O. Minutes, 27 April, 1938. C 3445/1941/18 (21716).
[69] F.O. Minutes, 25 May, 1938. C 4370/132/3
[70] F.O. Minutes, 11 July, 1938. C 6830/1941/18 (21727).

> the possession of an undertaking from us might encourage France to take action in defence of Czechoslovakia which, in the absence of such an undertaking, she would hesitate to take; moreover, it might serve as a direct challenge to Herr Hitler, who might feel that he could not submit to such a rebuff and (conclude) that the present moment would be favourable one for him to react against it. [71]

The risk, however, could be minimized if Britain were

> prepared to go tc great lengths in bringing the Czechoslovak Government to agree to measures which will settle the Sudeten question in conformity with the realities of the situation, unpleasant as those realities may become. [72]

In practical terms, what this meant was that, if necessary, "the Commision of Enquiry would not be debarred from recommending a drastic solution of the Sudeten Deutsch Problem, even a plebiscite under neutral supervision and control." [73] By thus attempting to reduce the probability of the negative pay-offs, the positive pay-offs of the suggested course could be brought into a sharper focus.

> A new commitment (so ran the March Memorandum) whether undertaken directly to Czechoslovakia or indirectly to Czechoslovakia in the form of an undertaking to France, might considerably reduce the chances of war, in that it might prove to be an effective deterrent to German action. [74]

The bureaucratic elite did not feel that deterrence could be exercised through a policy of keeping Germany guessing. "The conditions," wrote Strang, "in which we could hope to restrain the German Government by keeping them in uncertainty as to our intentions are, it is to be feared, no longer present." [75] The moderate elements in Germany had been forced into the background, the extremist hand had become stronger. The latter would undoubtedly take higher risks in the knowledge that Britain, which had frequently expressed an interest in the maintenance of the independence and integrity of Austria, had been successfully defied. The guarantee that the Foreign Office tried to incorporate in British policy through the reccmmendation that it made in the memorandum was partly designed to meet such extremist views. The commitment would be indicative of firmness towards Germany as the proposed International Commision would be a manifestation of firmness towards Czechoslovakia. A drastic solution suggested by the Commission might not be enough to eliminate the risk involved in making a commitment, but it would certainly justify "whatever risk there might be in trying to deter Germany from making war on Czechoslovakia to enforce a solution of the question." [76]

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[71] March Memorandum, op. cit.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

It is thus clear that in suggesting such a course, the Foreign Office was evidencing a moderate risk-taking propensity. Risk-taking of a higher order would have involved the support of an indirect commitment without any conditions attached to it and even more clearly, would have advocated a direct unconditional commitment to Czechoslovakia. The Grand Alliance came very close to doing this. By seeking to shape the international environment in a certain way, it left it to Germany either to accommodate herself to this new environment or declare herself categorically against it. The possibility of German participation in designing the new environment would consequently be ruled out. The brinkmanship involved in the proposed Grand Alliance left little room for policy manoeuvres and systemic adjustements. On the other hand, a policy of "no commitments" would have been a clear indication of a low risk-taking propensity. Apprehensions of French trigger-happiness and German ambitions would have greatly outweighed the possible deterrent effect of a commitment, thus resigning Britain to accept the alterations in the international environment the former two actors could induce. Britain would thus have forsaken any pretensions to mould the environment according to her image. It was because the Foreign Office wanted the British view respected that it thought it necessary to recommend warning the Germans to accept a solution that might not be 100% in their favour, but that was considered satisfactory by the British Government. Although the guarantee idea was not accepted by the British political leaders, it was a constant factor in Foreign Office thinking over the Sudeten Issue. For example, when the Federal solution was being discussed in April, 1938, Sir Orme Sargent observed, "We always come back to the point that the only way we could give a federal Czechoslovakia any permanence or stability would be through a direct guarantee."[77] Even as late as August, 1938, a senior member of the Foreign Office was writing,

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[75] Memorandum by William Strang on "Possible Measures to Avert German Action in Czechoslovakia," 17 March, 1938. C 1866/132/18 (21764).
[76] Ibid.

> Without some guarantee, I do not see how we can get the Czechoslovak nationalists to agree to the concessions that they will have to grant, get the French to recommend those concessions to the Czechoslovak Government, or get the Germans to respect Czech integrity when they have been granted."[78]

If the Foreign Office was prevented by the absence of a guarantee from suggesting with confidence some solution of the Sudeten problem, it, nevertheless, did not refrain from consistently advocating a policy of firmness towards Germany during that period.

The May Warning: Towards the end of the third week in May, the situation in the Sudeten areas suddenly worsened. Reports were received by the Foreign Office that the Sudeten Germans had set up a voluntary defence force and that the Reich Germans were moving their troops about in the border area. The Foreign Office was convinced that "the Germans were, in fact, contemplating action against Czechoslovakia and hoped to get away with it without attracting attention."[79] Reports from the Secret Service contained words to this effect. The crucial question for the Foreign Office was not whether the information was correct. Coming from such an impeccable source, it was not questioned. The crucial question rather was, as Strang put it, "Will the German intervene by marching in without warning or by way of representation followed by an ultimatum?"[80] Cadogan therefore urged Halifax to warn the German Goverment that if France came to Czechoslovakia's aid, in consequence of its treaty obligations, Britain "could not guarantee that they would not be forced by circumstances to become involved also."[81] The situation was so pressing that the warning was delivered during the last gasp of the political elite's 'promotive' phase.

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[77] F.O. Minutes, 11 April, 1938. C 2288/1941/18 (21714).
[78] F.O. Minutes, 16 August, 1938. C 8318/65/18 (21668).

It will remain a controversial question whether Germany was in fact preparing for military aggression.[82] Evidence suggests that the Czechoslovak Goverment over-reacted in ordering a mobilization. Be that as it may, it is what the Foreign Office believed and did, that is important to this analysis. The Foreign Office believed that the Germans had been up to mischief, that the Czechoslovak mobilization had been fully justified and that it had been the British firmness that had saved the day.[83] This latter impression tended to be confirmed through reports from secret sources in Berlin. It was suggested that the extremists amongst the Nazi leaders wanted immediate action to off-set this "humiliation," that the Nazi rank and file were depressed, that "the Fuehrer had somehow failed to hit to bulls-eye," and that most Germans had concluded "with sure mass instinct that the Fuehrer has this time had to accept a genuine defeat."[84]

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[79] F.O. Minutes, 25 May, 1938. C 5183/4786/18 (21768).

[80] F.O. Minutes, 20 May, 1938. C 4530/1941/18 (21719).

[81] Cadogan to Chamberlain, 21 May, 1938. PREM 1/265.

[82] The orthodox view, as stated by Wallace, holds that Hitler deliberately provoked a crisis in May, seeing in the pre-election tension in the Sudetenland an opportunity of subduing Czechoslovakia. W.V. Wallace,"The Making of the May Crisis," Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 41 (1962-63). The revisionist view, as expressed by D.C. Watt, does not regard the evidence produced as conclusive. D.C. Watt, "The May Crisis of 1938; A Rejoinder to Mr. Wallace," Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 44 (1966), pp. 475-80. A balanced conclusion seems to be that though Hitler planned no aggression in May, he could have ordered a limited movement of German troops to the border areas in case events in the Sudetenland got out of hand.

__The Runciman Mission__: This firm line towards Germany was most evident when the Runciman Mission was in Prague in August of 1938 and increasing pressure was being applied upon the Czechoslovak government to approach the Sudeten position. Reliable reports indicated that the crisis would peak after the Nurenberg Party Rally in the second week of September. The choice that faced the British Government was an excruciating one. Should it accept the reality of the deadline and urge Runciman to announce a settlement satisfactory to the Germans? Or should it warn the Germans that they would be held responsible if they took action before a settlement was reached? The Foreign Office overall favoured the latter course while the political elite favoured the former. In the Foreign Office view, there were not only the practical difficulties of making a pronouncement of substance while negotiations were still going on, but there was great cause to doubt whether Hitler would be satisfied by a Runciman pronouncement alone.[85] The only thing that might conceivably stop Hitler and provide an opportunity for the imposition of an equitable solution, the Foreign Office felt, would be an unambiguous definition of Britain's stand in the matter. The British bureaucratic apparatus was once again drawing the attention of its political leaders to a point it had made in March, 1938, viz. that the conditions did not exist for a deterrent effect to be exercised on Germany by keeping her guessing as to Britain's intentions. A Foreign Office minute put it clearly; "Had it been possible in July 1914 to make clear beyond peradventure our attitude, Germany would not have gone to war. This same probably holds good in August 1938."[86]

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[83] John Harvey (ed.), __The Diplomatic Diaries of Oliver Harvey 1937- 1940__, (London: Collins, 1970 , p. 145.
[84] F.O. Minutes, 1 June, 1938. C 5342/1941/18 (21723).

The Foreign Office felt justified in holding such a view because of what it perceived had been the German reception to the Runciman Mission. Not only had the Reich leaders refused to recognize the efforts of the mission, whether successful or not, not only had they had witheld their cooperation from it, but they had decided to bring their troops in Austria and part of the Army in Germany up to war footing.[87] In the bureaucratic view, these measures were "a big bluff designed to frighten us and the French into forcing further concessions from the Czechs."[88] Only a public warning to the Germans could persuade them that Britain would not tolerate military intervention in Czechoslovakia, that any war would likely be long-drawn and that ultimately, in such a war, her vulnerability on the natural resource front would tell tragically upon her.

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[85] F.O. Minutes, 22 August, 1938. C 8587/1941/18 (21732).
[86] F.O. Minutes, 4 August, 1938. C 7897/1941/18 (21730).

The September Warning: Though the bureaucratic pressure in this respect actually peaked in September, it was von Kleist's visit in the third week of August that actually gave it its impetus. A major impetus to this trend of thinking was given by the visit of Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin to London in the third week of August. Von Kleist, in an interview with Vansittart, told him that Hitler, of his own will and against the advice of his generals, had decided upon a violent solution of the Sudeten question.[89]

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[87] Henderson to Halifax, No. 361 Saving, 3 August, 1938. C 7892/165/18.

[88] F.O. Minutes, 4 Agust, 1938. C 7892/65/18 (21667).

[89] F.O. Minutes, 18 August, 1938. C 8391/1941/18 (21731).

The 27th of September, 1938 was the zero date and if the British Government wanted to stop him, it would have to act before the middle of September. The action that he recommended was an explicit warning to Hitler to stay his hand. Von Kleist's fears were independently confirmed by reports that the German Government had separately handed to the three Entente governments an identical note to the effect that "Germany would have to intervene if the Sudeten question is not settled quickly and in accordance with the Sudeten demands."[90] Prodded by the Foreign Office, the Foreign Secretary agreed that the warning should be publically delivered. But when this was done at Lanark on 27th August by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon, it turned out to be little more than the ambiguous warning that Chamberlain had delivered in Parliament on 24th March, 1938. The Foreign Office was understandably disappointed. By now, the Czechs had already made what it considered a generous offer to the Sudeten Germans, incorporating a form of territorial autonomy with constitutional guarantees, these guarantees to be accompanied by an increase in the number of German civil servants in the Sudeten areas, withdrawal of state police, cessation of the press war and certain financial subsidies.[91] It appeared also that the Sudetens were ready to accept these terms, if Berlin would let them. It was therefore on the Reich that appropriate presssure should have been brought. Britain certainly could not allow Germany to attack Czechoslovakia on the basis that the full eight points of Karlsbad had not been conceded whereas, as a matter of fact, the Czech offer went most of the way to meet their substance.

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[90] F.O. Minutes, 23 August, 1938. C 8635/1941/18 (21732).
[91] F.O. Minutes, 25 August, 1938. C 8955/1941/18 (21733).

> "We are now in a position," wrote Vansittart, the Chief Diplomat Adviser, "where the Germans are going to receive a large dollop of jam which 999 in every 1000 would be only too delighted to accept if they were not carried away or terrorised by the War Party. But I am very much afraid that the said War Party will be tempted to throw the jam out of the window unless they see not only jam on one side but a stick on the other. [92]

As we have shown though, the Foreign Office was talking to a political elite that was on the eve of entering the 'acquiescent' phase in its policy-making. Halifax admitted the Foreign Office objection, admitted that Britain should try to get Hitler to allow the Sudeten Germans to reach an agreement with the Czechoslovak Government. He was, however, reluctant to wield the stick the Foreign Office wanted him to wield. The Foreign Secretary was not only fighting himself, he was also under intense pressure from his colleagues in the Cabinet. Nevertheless, the Foreign Office continued to press the Foreign Secretary to give Hitler an emplicit, unambiguous warning. One form this could take was as follows:

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[92] F.O. Minutes, 25 August, 1938. C 9608/1941/18 (21736).

> We should say to him that what is now offered is as generous a settlement as could possibly be expected and that, if inspite of it, Germany were to invade Czechoslovakia, it is tc be forseen that France would honor her treaty obligations irrespective of the immediate course of hostilities. Our vital interests would prevent us from seeing France beaten. [93]

The object of 'promotive' pressure was to make the Czechs more amenable to reascn and the Germans less prone to aquisitiveness. The warning to Hitler was calculated to achieve the latter. At the continuing instigation of his bureaucratic advisors, the Foreign Secretary agreed tentatively to give a speech, parts of which ran as follows:

> I know something of how the British mind works...They want peace...But British people are a strange folk and might be quickly swept to stern action...We are strengthening our defences. We could give a pretty good account of ourselves...We need not fear war...I have spoken frankly. [94]

According to Sir Horace Wilson, the Chief Industrial Advisor, who culled these phrases from the draft, they amounted to 'threatening' Germany: making "more explicit" th warnings of 24th March and 21 May. [95] In any event, the speech was vetoed by Chamberlain. [96] With the speech shelved, the possibility of a public warning to Germany was abandoned. The Foreign Office now started pressing for a private warning to Hitler to be delivered to him by the British Ambassador during the Nurenberg rally. On 4th

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Draft of Halifax speech, PREM 1/265.
[95] Minute by Horace Wilson, 1 September, 1938. PREM 1/265.
[96] Minute by Neville Chamberlain, undated. PREM 1/265.

September, Halifax decided that should an interview be granted by Hitler, the British Ambassador should warn him that "however disinterested we might be in Czechoslovakia and however reluctant we would be to drawn into any war, it must nevertheless be understood by Hitler that no British Government would stand by and see France defeated if, as a result of events, France should get into hostilities with Germany." [97] Halifax, however, made one stipulation. The Ambassador should deliver the warning as coming from him alone. Before the relevant instructions could be sent, however, Halifax thought the matter over again and decided that the need for a private warning had not been clearly established.

The Foreign Office had one more opportunity to bring upon the Germans the sort of pressure they wanted. On 9th September, it indirectly received a request from the German Permanent Under-Secretary himself that a forthright warning be given to Hitler to the effect that "if an attack were made by Germany on Czechoslovakia, a war would start in which Great Britain would inevitably be on opposite side to Germany." [98] Only thus, claimed Ernst Freiherr von Weizacker, could the crisis be brought home to the sequestered Nazi leader, misled by his subordinates

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[97] Minute by Horace Wilson, 4 September, 1938. PREM 1/265.

[98] Letter from Skrine Stevenson (Geneva) to Strang, 8 September, 1938 enclosing message from Weizacker. C 9525/1941/18.

Ribbbentrop and Himmler into thinking that neither France nor Britain would, under any circumstances, come to Czechoslovakia's aid. Such a message from the Permanent Head of the German Foreign Office was unorthodox indeed. What added conviction to it was his near-resignation over the issue. Again the British political elite succumbed to bureaucratic pressure. The warning dispatched to the British Ambassador was suitably firm in tone. Germany was to be informed that "if France came to Czechoslovakia's aid, it seemed inevitable that the sequence of events must result in a general conflict from which Great Britain could not stand aside." ** Moreover the warning was to be delivered as if emanating from the British Government itself. But - and this was a major flaw - it was not to be delivered to Hitler himself; it was to be handed over to to Ribbentrop, with a request that it be transmitted to the former. As it was, the warning was never delivered to either. Close on the heels of the dispatch containing it, went a dispatch countermanding it. Shortly thereafter, came Hitler's Nuremberg speech, the spread of disorder in the Sudeten areas and Chamberlain's flight to Germany. With this chain of events and the assumption by Chamberlain of a tight personal control over policy, the Foreign Office accepted the defeat of its 'promotive' efforts.

** Halifax to Henderson, Tel. 354, 9 September, 1938. C 9656/1941/18 (21737).

CAUSAL FACTORS : INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The March memorandum provides us with prima facie evidence that the Foreign Office was more sensitive to some of the variables mentioned in our framework than to others. If this is the case, its moderate risk taking and 'promotive' policy-making stand is most logically explained in terms of these variables. Before turning to a consideration of the latter, a closer look at the memorandum will make the bureaucratic elite's policy orientation even clearer. We turn to Table 8 for this purpose.

TABLE 8

TYPE OF VARIABLE	NUMBER OF REFERENCES	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL	RELATION TO FAVOURED ALTERNATIVE
International Structure	18	39. 1%	Positive
Issue Salience	16	34.8%	Positive
Military Strength	8	17.4%	Ambiguous
Public Opinion	4	8.7%	Ambiguous

Of the 46 statements gathered from the Foreign Office memorandum, 18 referred in one way or another to the bureaucratic respect for international structure and 16 referred to the salience of the Sudeten Issue for Britain. There were 8 references to the variable of Military Strength, but their impact was ambiguous. Three distinctly referred to Czechoslovakia's vulnerability, but the remainder appear to carry the message that though Britain's military position left much to be desired, her position relative to German in the future might be worse. There were 4 references to public opinion, all in connexion with Czechoslovakia's need to strengthen her case in the eyes of the public of Britain and the world. There was no reference to the existing state of the British public opinion and whether an alternative state of public opinion would have made a commitment possible. There were no direct references to the variable of political stability. As for the factor of ideology, it appears in the present case to have expressed itself through the bureaucratic respect for international structure.

At this point, we may reflect upon the explanatory value of the variables mentioned in Table 2. The basic assumptions underlying the 'promotive' stance of the Foreign Office were as follows:

1) That Germany should not be allowed to upset the stability

of the European system.

2) That the point on which Germany had to be faced was the Sudeten Issue.

These assumptions are directly related to the bureaucratic respect for international structure and to the variable of issue salience. We shall now examine these and the other factors for their causal impact.

RESPECT FOR STRUCTURE

The ideological faith in the balance of power as an essential ingredient of British foreign policy is evident in the bureaucratic qualms about Germany's hegemonic designs. As the British Ambassador in Budapest wrote in March 1938,

> Through all the movements of British policy, since the birth of modern Europe after the Renaissance, one vital aim has been followed consistently - to oppose with every means, and to the end, the domination of Europe by a single power.[100]

As Chapter II - the background chapter - indicates, Britain had, in the inter-War period, consistently tried to play an ameliorative role, trying to find compromises for the many conflicts and pressures then rampant. The bureaucratic accent on compromise was a product of its awareness of the role that Britain had traditionally played. The recognition of this role reinforced its commitment to the international structure and to change within the existing rules of the game. The alternative of a conditional commitment to France that it recommended in the Memorandum was a concrete manifestation of both this commitment and change. As the Memorandum explained,

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[100] Knox to Halifax, No. 44, 10 March, 1938. C 1872/132/18 (21764).

> The ground upon which it is sought to justify the undoubted risk which we should be assuming is that unless we make a stand now, Germany will march uninterruptedly to hegemony in Europe, which will be but a first step towards a deliberate challenge to the British Empire."[101]

The Foreign Office feared that a continuing deterioration of the existing structure, through the extension by force or otherwise, of the Nazi idea to other parts of Europe, would lead to "the isolation of Great Britain and France in Western Europe, with all the consequent loss of influence, pretige and even security."[102] If the Nazi idea triumphed, the smaller states of Europe could in no sense be regarded as sovereign, but rather as victims of the totalitarian ideal. The Austrian Anschluss had resulted in a "sudden shifting of the centre of gravity in Europe" and only Britain could do something about it.

A contention of this thesis is that a conservative outlook as expressed in the respect for international structure tends to create pressures for a 'promotive' orientation in Foreign Policy. Though the ideological factor does not necessarily press only for the status quo, the change that it finds acceptable has to be brought about in a regulated and orderly fashion. Respect for international structure creates a desire within the decision-maker for a control of the environment. In the case of the British bureaucratic elite, it was this desire which impelled it towards a control of French policy vis-a-vis the Sudeten Question. The commitment to France was deemed by the bureaucratic elite to be the inevitable payment for the desired control. The rejection by the political elite of the idea did not prevent the Foreign Office from consistently advocating some limited military identification with France. It advocated for example the commencement of staff conversations in military matters between France and Britain, deriding the military expert's opinion in the process.[103] It urged the attendance of the British Air Attache at the upcoming secret French air manoeuvres and favoured the grant of similar privileges to the French Air

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[101] March Memorandum, op. cit.
[102] Ibid.

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[103] When the matter was raised in early 1938 by the French, the Foreign Office rejected a Chiefs of Staff contention that the conversations would be politically exploited by the French and prove disadvantageous to Britain's contemplated role in the international system Strang called the Chiefs of Staff sub-committee's report "an astounding document," protesting that the committee members were exceeding their functions" and rejected the idea that the proposed Conversations would create "the irreconciliable suspicion and hostility of Germany" and thus have a deplorable effect upon British efforts to reach a detence with Germany. "The fact is," wrote the Central Section Head," that whether the Chiefs of Staff like it or not, certain commitments to Belgium and France already exist, and all we are trying to do is to see that if ever those commitments have to be fulfilled, we should be in the best possible position to fulfill them. F.O. Minutes, 4 February, 1938. C 841/37/18 (21653).

Attache with regard to the British air manouevres. It refused to believe that closer cooperation with the French in military matters would necessarily lead to any rash action by France in Central Europe. It was not overly concerned if these indications of military co-operation were to come to Germany's attention.[104]

In this persistent appeal for a limited military identification with France, the primary motivation was to increase French dependency on Britain and thus by the same token, increase the degree of British control over French policy. The political factor dominated the military one in Foreign Office thinking, not vice versa. "The military situation in Europe," ran a Foreign Office minute, "is determined by the political and the political would be determined by the attitude adopted by France and U.K.[105]

The emphasis on Czechoslovakia's integrity reflected the bureaucratic concern for international structure and orderly change. The various objections of the bureaucratic elite to a Sudeten plebiscite were set out in a carefully-prepared memorandum circulated to British Cabinet Ministers in June, 1938.[106] The arguments mentioned in March were still regarded as valid, showing a continuing consistency on the part of the bureaucratic elite. The memorandum stressed that the frontiers of Bohemia were geographically natural and historically well-established. The Sudeten Germans and the Czechs had lived side by side for many centuries. Could a plebiscite necessarily express "the permanent views" or safeguard "the permanent interests"[107] of the Sudeten minority? Could Czech national sentiment accept the handing of substantial areas to Germany? Economically, there was a close interdependence betwen the predominantly industrial Sudeten districts and the predominantly agricultural Czech districts. Could Czechoslovakia accept the unbalancing of its economy? Could she afford "the abandonment of natural mountain frontiers, upon whose defences immense sums had been spent?"[108] The Foreign Office thought not.

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[104] "Does it really matter," wrote the Assistant Permanent Under-Secretary, "if foreign powers should imagine that Anglo-French co-operation is closer than it eally is, so long as we ourselves see that this co-operation is kept within the limits we have laid down." F.O. Minutes, 25 June, 1938. C 6405/37/18 (21654).

[105] F.O. Minutes, 11 May, 1938. C 3928/1941/18 (21718).

It should be mentioned, however, that maintenance of Czechoslovakia in its existing shape was not necessarily synonymous for the Foreign Office with the maintenance of international order. We have seen how in the March Memorandum, it had even appeared to consent to a plebiscite provided it could be backed by a British guarantee. It was this condition which was crucial to the Foreign Office. It could not expect anything so severe from another nation without giving anything in return. The concept of sine qua non was crucial to its thinking. It could not take, if it could not give - the very essence, in terms of our definition, of a 'promotive' stance. It was prepared, as a last resort, to alter the internal structure of Czechoslovakia if it could obtain thereby an iron-clad guarantee that the basic structure of the European System would not be further altered.

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[106] F.O. Memorandum on "Difficulties of Holding a Plebiscite in the Sudeten Areas of Czechoslovakia," 28 June, 1938. C 7314/1941/18 (21728).

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid.

This argument also applied to Czechoslovakia's external status. An unguaranteed neutrality was a dangerous thing to ask of Czechoslovakia since it compromised her security and, as such, her integrity. It was this form that the Foreign Office found unacceptable, not neutrality as such. Its views on the matter were drawn together and find their most comprehensive manifestation in a memorandum prepared in June, 1938.[109] Four types of neutrality were distinguished: one, a neutrality that was accompanied by individual pledges of non-aggression by interested states; two, a neutrality that was accompanied by separate pledges of protection by interested states; three, a neutrality that was guaranteed jointly by these states; and four, a neutrality that was guaranteed by a few, but not all the interested states.

The first was the weakest and most closely approaches the unguaranteed, unilateral form of neutrality. The Foreign Office realized that the Czechoslovak Government could not be induced by pledges of non -aggression to sacrifice its existing treaty structure. The second kind might be acceptable to the Czechoslovaks, but it was extremely doubtful whether Germany would give her formal pledge to respect it. A joint guarantee, on the other hand as incorporated in the third model, might not be acceptable to Czechoslovakia since it implied that if one of the guarantors did not discharge its obligations, neither would the others be legally obliged to. Czechoslovak susceptibilities and German intransigence made the consideration of any of these three types problematical.

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[109] F.O. Memorandum on the possibility of Neutralizing Czechoslovakia, 9 June, 1938. C 5235/1941/18.

This left only the fourth type i.e. a discretely guaranteed neutrality. As the Foreign Office framed it, it obviated not only the need for German consent or approval but also retained the essence of Czechoslovakia's existing treaty structure. All that would be required of Czechoslovakia would be that she refuse to go to the aid of France or the Soviet Union should any of them be attacked. In other words, her pacts with these two countries would lose their mutual character and operate to guarantee Czechoslovakia's existence alone. Czechoslovakia, then, would still have the guarantee from France and the Soviet Union and might simultaneously make her existence politically more acceptable to Germany. Neutrality after the Belgian model was what the Foreign Office came to favour. It satisfied the integrity criterion, it did not upset the perceived canons of international order and it could possibly assist in creating a better atmosphere for a solution of the Sudeten Problem.

The bureaucratic respect for international structure is most succinctly expressed in the following statement :

> In any concession that we make to Germany, political, economic or colonial - and there is little doubt that such concessions will have to be made - we shall try to obtain as a counterpart an increased sense of international security and enhanced prospects for the preservation of peace.. The three chief elements in our German policies seem therefore to be 1) maximum increase in our armed strength 2) a prudent and resourceful diplomacy 3) the assertion , if need be, of our determination to have our view respected."[110]

ISSUE SALIENCE

We have speculated in Chapter I that the bureaucratic elite tends to see salience in an issue much before the political elite does. It, therefore, seeks involvement in the issue at an earlier date. The Sudeten Issue was not regarded by the bureaucratic elite as a purely internal issue. It was seen to have implications for the stability of Europe. It signified "the beginning of Germany's penetration of Central Europe, which , if not checked, will culminate in her establishing more or less complete domination of that part of Europe."[111] It was feared that Germany would use various forms of pressure to impose her will - "through cajolery, intimidation or propaganda.."[112] - on the weak and vulnerable countries of the Danubian Basin. Her object, it was stated,

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[110] F.O. Minutes, 6 May, 1938. C 3600/42/18 (21657).

> would be to reduce them to the position, both politically and economically, of vassal states; to sever links which connect them with other foreign countries, expecially France and Russia; to dissolve the undertakings which at present bind certain of them together, such as the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente; and generally to obtain control of their foreign policy, their armed forces and their economic system.[113]

Already, Hitler's magnetic appeal was having an effect on the German population of Czechoslovakia and this fact would certainly tempt Hitler to press for its incorporation into the Reich. The situation was one that brooked no delay. William Strang, the Head of the Central Section and the major contributor to the memorandum, wrote:

> I am afraid that the momentum is so great and the present situation is so favourable for the achievement of successful adventure for anyone who is not afraid to strike, that we shall have a further serious deterioration in the situation, unless Hitler is brought up with a jerk.[114]

The "obvious" point on which to pull Hitler up short, as the memorandum stated, was over "the continued independence of

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[111] March Memorandum
[112] Memorandum by Sir Orme Sargent on "The Effects of the Annexation of Austria by Germany on the General Economic Situation and on British Interests and Policy." 17 March, 1938. C 1866/132/18 (21764).
[113] Ibid.
[114] F.O. Minutes, 18 March, 1938. C 1809/132/18 (21764).

Czechoslovakia."[115] It was here that Britain came in. Britain would have to determine if there was any point in this process of domination at which she was prepared to stand. If that point could be determined Britain should notify the Germans of it and make it plain that to pass it would mean a European conflagration. As far as the Foreign Office was concerned, this point was centred in the Sudeten Issue.

It was because of the felt salience of the Sudeten Issue that the Foreign Office was not particularly enthusiastic about the political elite's line of weaning France away from Czechoslovakia. Instead of dwelling constantly on the military vulnerability and "lost cause" character of Czechoslovakia - favourite themes of the political elite - it was concerned with getting France to adopt the 'promotive' stance towards the Sudeten issue that it, itself favoured. What this involved was not onl a show of suitable firmness towards Germany - limited military co-operation with France would be in line with this - but also sufficient pressure on Czechoslovakia to enable it to make the necessary concessions. The salience of the Sudeten Problem thus reflected itself in efforts by the British bureaucratic elite to achieve a measure of control over French policy. This control, from the bureaucratic perspective, was not so much control against any adventurism or rashness on the French part, but rather for an equitable solution of the problem. France, being closer to Czechoslovakia, could influence her where Britain could not. That these bureaucratic hopes did not realize themselves in practice is beside the point. What must be remembered is that these hopes had their origin in the growing salience of the Sudeten Issue for the British Foreign Office. In fact it was this increase in issue salience that lead it early in the game to advocate British initiatives in the matter.

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[115] March Memorandum, op. cit.

Issue Salience also revealed itself in the desire of the bureaucratic elite to come up with a scheme that would lead to an agreement between the Czechoslovaks and the Sudeten Germans. The more salient the issue became, the more vital became the need for a solution based on an agreement between the disputing parties.

One of the grounds for the dismissal of the plebiscite scheme, for example, was that of issue salience. A Sudeten plebiscite was seen to offer "so many opportunities for disturbances and incidents that it might create the occasion for the war it was intended to prevent."[116]

Issue Salience also reflected itself in the informal pressure that was exercised over the Czechoslovak and Sudeten negotiators. In exercising this informal pressure, it was motivated by only one consideration - that an equitable solution be brought closer to being. For example, in the immediate aftermath of the May Crisis, when the Foreign Office perceived an opportunity for a speedy resolution of the problem based on the modified Karlsbad demands, Vansittart (who, by far, was the most important bureaucratic figure in the negotiations) minuted:

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[116] Ibid.

> I think that on the one hand, Henlein should be forced back into the collar, and I can easily let him know that I think he is behaving too recalcitrantly and that if he gets a good offer ... he ought to try to close with it. And on other hand, it is of course essential that the Czechs should make a really good offer ... otherwise Henlein will be forced willy nilly along the road of obstruction and danger.[117]

The Czechs did not make the expected offer - and Henlein was not pressured to accept anything.[118] As a matter of fact, the Foreign Office found greater cause to be irritated with the Czechs for not meeting what they considered to be Henlein's scaled - down demands which basically involved a limited degree of self-government. The Foreign Office was thus not averse to recommending that pressure be applied, but only so as to urge the Czechs on "with the negotiations on the London lines." [119] But, as we have discussed earlier, the pressure was always to be judiciously applied. It was also to be applied even-handedly when a situation warranted it.

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[117] F.O. Minutes, 26 May, 1938. C 5260/1941/18 (21723).

[118] The March Memorandum had assumed that Henlein was a lackey of Hitler's. Yet the F.O. view of Henlein was not consistently black. Whereas Hitler was mostly seen in expansionist terms, Henlein was seen to have a moderate streak that could be developed, given the right circumstances. The following admittedly lengthy quotation from a minute by Sargent is the best available official comment on the matter: "We alway assume that Henlein now has no will of his own and is Hitler's mouthpiece, but there must always be at the back-if not indeed at the front of Henlein's mind the thought that if for lack of a settlement, hostilities break out, the chances are that, whether it be a German invasion or a civil war, the battlefield will be the territory of the Sudetendeutsch. I feel that there may be something to be made out of this argument and that at the appropriate moment, it might even turn the scale in favour of a settlement between Henlein and Benes." F.O. Minutes, 27 April, 1938. C 3441/1941/18 (21716).

__MILITARY STRENGTH__: The variable of military strength is indeed referred to in the Foreign Office memorandum, but its impact on the policy behavior of the bureaucratic elite is uncertain. Attention is drawn to the increased military vulnerability of Czechoslovakia following the Nazi occupation of Austria. Britain's military position vis-a-vis Germany, however, is not pronounced upon with any clarity. The phrase "in the present state of our military prepartions" [120] leads one to believe that the Foreign Office found Britain's military strength wanting. Confirming this impression is the statement "we should intensify our own rearmament, particularly in the air." [121] On the other hand, the opinion is also expressed that "it may well be true that Germany's superiority in arms may be greater a year or two hence than it is now..." [122] This opinion is traceable to Cadogan's individual memorandum, to wit, that

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[119] F.O. Minutes, 31 May, 1938. C 5261/1941/18 (21723).
[120] March Memorandum, op. cit.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.

"Germany will be better prepared for the enterprise in a year or two and....relatively, we shall be still weaker vis-a-vis Germany (cf. aeroplane production figures)." [123] The broad question that faced Britain, as Cadogan put it a few sentences later was, "shall we put it off till our prospects, maybe, will be worse but with the hope that in the meanwhile something will turn up." [124] Whatever the bureaucratic view of Britain's military strength was, the fact remains that the Foreign Office was more persuaded by political than military factors in advocating a conditional commitment. Britain's military in 1938 might be better than in 1940, but "the ground upon which it is sought to justify the undoubted risk which we should be assuming is that unless we make a stand now, Germany will march uninterruptedly to hegemony in Europe..." [125] The factor of military strength does not appear to have been a crucial one in influencing the bureaucratic elite.

PUBLIC OPINION: The influence of the factor of public opinion appears at best, to be indirect. The proper treatment of the Sudeten Germans by the Czech authorities is seen not only to have implications for the broader question of Prague-Berlin relations, but also upon "the sympathy and support which Czechoslovakia will enjoy in the world at large."[126] The conditional aspect of the commitment was calculated to "establish Czechoslovakia's moral position vis-a-vis public opinion in this country and in the world generally.[127] The more important reason for insisting upon a better treatment for the Sudeten Germans was "to leave the German government with no reasonable cause for complaint."[128] Public opinion, therefore, had only a limited influence upon the bureaucratic elite. There is no reflection in the March memorandum of the state of the current opinion in the country and there is certainly no attempt to indicate whether the proposed commitment would be acceptable to the British public. It even appears that public opinion is seen as a factor to be manipulated rather than as a determining influence of the course suggested.

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[123] Memorandum by Sir Alexander Cadogan on "The Situation Created by the German Absorption of Austria and on the Possibility of German Action in Czechoslovakia," 17 March, 1938. C 1886/132/18 (21764).
[124] Ibid.
[125] March Memorandum, op. cit.

SUMMARY

We have seen, in this chapter, that the policy orientation of the bureaucratic elite was consistently stable and consistently 'promotive'. Even before the Anschluss, we find the 'promotive' strain prominent in its ideological make-up.

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[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

Two basic assumptions appeared to dominate Foreign Office thinking regarding Germany in the pre-Anschluss period. One was that Germany should not be allowed to expand at will, the other was that she should be allowed to take her proper place in the community of nations.

After the Anschluss, this strain manifested itself clearly in the recommendation by the Foreign Office of a conditional indirect commitment to Czechoslovakia. In making this recommendation, the bureaucratic elite realized that a moderate amount of risk was involved, but it felt that the expected "deterrence" effect on Hitler would make the risk worthwhile. Even though this recommendation was rejected by the political elite, the 'promotive' strain in bureaucratic thinking continued to manifest itself in the schemes it suggested or rejected in its search for a solution to the Sudeten problem. Of the major schemes considered, a plebiscite was rejected as pandering too blatantly to the German wishes; a Czech neutrality in a somewhat modified form was looked upon more favourably; a limited form of autonomy for the Sudeten minority was considered as most closely approximating the ideal. In any case, the bureaucratic elite stood for a closer and constructive involvement in the issue, primarily through mediation. The 'promotive' element also revealed itself in the bureaucratic recommendation of a moderate display of firmness in dealings with Germany. Ideally, it would have liked to see Britain exercise an even-handed pressure on both Czechoslovakia and

Germany. When from August onwards, it started fearing a German resort to violence to resolve the issue, it was consistently pressing for some means to deter her. The alternative it favoured was an explicit declaration of support for Czechoslovakia, should Germany attack her.

If the 'promotive' orientation was typical for the bureaucratic elite and the risk-taking propensity displayed by it was moderate, the factors influencing it were also ones towards which it tended to be peculiarly sensitive. It did not ignore other factors, particularly the military one. But the variables that mattered more as far as it was concerned were international structure and issue salience. Its respect for international structure had its origins in the ideological faith in the balance of power and expressed itself in its desire that Britain do something to correct "the sudden shifting of the centre of gravity in Europe"[129] as a result of the Anschluss. Its sensitivity to the international implications of what the political elite saw as ostensibly a domestic issue resulted in its regarding the Sudeten Issue as a test case for the tenability of the existing rules of the game.

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[129] Sargent Memorandum, op. cit.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis was undertaken with a two-fold purpose in mind. One was to learn something more about the way British policy over the Sudeten Issue developed in 1938; the other was to investigate the tenability of the argument that the political and bureaucratic elites tend to respond differently to stimuli from the international environment.

Risk-taking was taken to be the primary variable, the propensity to risk being regarded as the best ground for exploring the hypothesized differences between the two elites. A battery of domestic and international variables was introduced as being critical in determining the risk-taking propensities of the two elites. The domestic variables were: Military Strength, Political Stability and Public Opinion. The international variables, on the other hand, were: Respect for Structure, Environmental Hostility and Issue Salience. It was hypothesized that the sensitivity of the two elites to these variables differed: that, whereas the political elite tended to be more influenced by considerations of Military Strength, Political Stability, Public Opinion and Environmental Hostility and more liable to fluctuations in risk-taking, the bureaucratic elite was apparently more susceptible to consideration of Issue Salience and Respect for Structure with a more or less in-built tendency towards a middle road in risk-taking. A moderate risk-taking propensity, it was assumed, leads a decision-making elite to adopt a 'promotive' course in policy-making, a high risk-taking propensity to either a 'preservative' or an 'acquiescent' course. Analysis of the data, gathered from various sources, but principally from the files of the Public Record Office (London), revealed some interesting differences between the two elites in their approach to the Sudeten Issue.

The bureaucratic elite consistently adopted a 'promotive' approach to the issue, an approach that was inspired by a moderate propensity to risk-taking. Incensed by the audacious Nazi take-over of Austria, it felt that British interest, and the interest of European peace, lay in standing up to Hitler over Czechoslovakia. It recognized that a problem over the Sudeten minority existed and was prepared to make concessions to Hitler on this matter. In return, it demanded that Hitler limit whatever aims he had in the East and show a similar spirit of compromise. The alternative of a conditional commitment to France that it favoured in March, 1938 and which it never really gave up, manifested this give-and-take spirit. The commitment aspect of its proposal was meant to deter Hitler from any overtly aggressive action. The conditional aspect of the proposal was meant to be a signal that his concern for the Sudeten Germans would not be ignored. Equity was the keynote of this alternative, as indeed, it was of the entire bureaucratic approach. The various solutions that came up during the period under study were assessed by the Foreign Office on the basis of their equity. Primary amongst these solutions was that of a Sudeten plebiscite. It was a solution that the Foreign Office could not bring itself to favour, even in the anxiety-ridden days of September, 1938. During this period, rather, it sought unsuccessfully to have an explicit warning delivered to Hitler as a means of preventing him from attacking Czechoslovakia, using the Sudeten grievances as a pretext.

The political elite, on the other hand, was somewhat unsteady in its approach to the Sudeten Issue. In fact, unlike the historical analyses of the subject,[1] the present analysis discerns four distinct phases in the development of the political elite's thinking over the issue. The first phase was 'preservative', being marked by a near-paralysis in the decision-making ability of the political elite. Hitler's aggression against Austria left it somewhat confused as to what his ultimate ambitions might be. On the one hand, the action had been audacious enough to be regarded as a challenge to the European system, thus confronting the political elite with the painful problem of responding to it suitably. On the other hand, the action had only obtained for Hitler what many regarded as rightfully his. Unable to assess confidently Hitler's intentions and unwilling to provoke him into an undesirable course, the political elite had initially viewed the Sudeten Issue rather myopically and refrained from intervening in it in any decisive fashion. It was a reversal in this trend of thinking that marked the beginning of the second phase. During the Anglo-French Conversations of April, 1938, a decision was reached that Czechoslovakia would first be persuaded to grant the Sudeten Germans concessions thought by Britain to be equitable. With this done, Hitler could be approached with these proposals and should he give no indication of being tempted by them, be warned that his unreasonable attitude could plunge Europe into war. In fact, it was a similarly firm warning that was perceived by the political elite to have halted him during the May Crisis of 1938.

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[1] For a succinct overview of various historical writings, see Dwight E. Lee (ed.) Munich, Blunder, Plot or Tragic Necessity (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 1970).

But rather than be encouraged by such an assessment, the elite slid back into the 'preservative' fold and remained there for the major part of summer. This 'preservative' phase was characterized by an unwillingness on its part to take any meaningful initiative in the matter. The political elite was bound not only by a reluctance to press the Czechs too hard or to warn the Germans too forcefully, but by a self-imposed restriction not to involve Britain too closely in the Czech-Sudeten negotiatons. When it became apparent that the negotiations had deadlocked, if indeed they had progressed at all, the political elite dispatched Runciman to Prague with the express instructions "to hold the fort."[2] A suitable measure of firmness, both with the Czechs and the Germans, might possibly have moved the problem nearer to a solution, but this firmness was lacking in this, the third phase.

The last-or 'acquiescent'- phase began in September, with the political elite refraining from delivering an explicit warning to Hitler, fearing it might provoke him rather than restrain him. The acceptance of the idea of a delayed plebiscite gave way at Hitler's insistence to an immediate plebiscite. This, in turn, converted itself into an outright cession of the Sudeten territories. In all this, the political elite took pains not to impose conditions on the unpredictable Fuehrer. Rather, it showed itself willing to accept the conditions imposed on it by Hitler.

In examining the assumption that the two elite groups were more influenced by some factor types than by others and in hypothesizing that they were susceptible to different levels of risk-taking, a trying problem has been to give the concepts an empirical measure. It has, for example, been impossible to indicate that the risk-taking level of an elite group was of the order of 8 units or 9 units, in the same manner as one can say that the temperature on a particular day is 8 degrees or 9 degrees Centigrade. Even the gradations used - high, moderate or low - can be properly appreciated only in the context of the relevant scenario. It is for this reason that the earlier chapters have sought to give an overall picture of the two elite perspectives. Though this does not conclusively prove the validity of the hypotheses mentioned in the initial chapter, it does provide one with prima facie evidence of their tenability. Most hypotheses in Political Science cannot be commented upon with the finality of the physical sciences, the relevant concepts not being as readily quantifiable. In the present instance, one is satisfied that in the case of the Sudeten Issue, the two elite groups thought and reacted differently. One can even speculate that if analysis were undertaken regarding other issues touching the international environment in one vital respect or the other, the same pattern would pertain.

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[2] Runciman to Halifax, 10 August, 1938. C 8510/1941/18 (21732).

The conclusions of this study reinforce those reached in studies focusing upon the differences between political and bureaucratic elites carried out by others. The latter, of which the one by Eldersveld [3] is notable, have suggested that the political elite is clientele-oriented, approachable, adaptive, intent on conflict management and if possible, conflict avoidance and finally, representative of and exploiting multiple interests. The bureaucratic elite, on the other hand, is inspired by rule obeisance, emphasis on discipline, rigidity, empire building and depersonalization in human relations. Referring to the policy functions of these attributes, Kirkpatrick [4] has stressed that the political elite is inclined to be more incremental in its decision-making than the bureaucratic elite. In a similar vein, Meller [5] has suggested that, whereas, the former is more concerned with specific short range goals, the latter is inclined to favour long-range results.

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[3] Samuel J. Eldersveld, Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis, (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964). See also Walter G. Holset, "The Paradoxes of Public Administration," Public Personnel Review, April 1965, pp. 12 8-12; Eugene Edel, "A Study in Managerial Motivation," Personnel Administration, November-December 1966, pp. 31-8.

We believe that our study of the Sudeten Issue tends to confirm the validity of these views. Rather than go into the details of these differences again, we may more appropriately mention here a statement of Halifax, in which the difference between the two elites clearly stands out.

> I am not happy (he wrote) over Foreign Office attitude as to Czechoslovkia or Austria. I personally would like to go further. It is going to be very bad if we get to talks and they break down. Therefore, I think we must see pretty clearly how far we are really prepared to go... [6]

The talks that he had in mind were the ones which

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[4] Evron M. Kirkpatrick, "Toward a More Responsible Two-party System: Political Science, Policy Science or Pseudo-Science?" American Political Science Review, 4 (December, 1971), pp. 965-90.

[5] Norman Meller, "Executive-Legislative Conflict and the Personnel Administration," Public Personnel Review, April 1966, pp. 111-14.

[6] Note by Halifax, 8 November, 1937. PREM 1/330.

Chamberlain intended should take place with Germany, with the ultimate aim of establishing European stability. The Foreign Office was not against such talks and it was not, as we have mentioned earlier, against making concessions to Hitler, but it believed, unlike the political elite, that stability could best be secured by conceding to Hitler as little as was humanly possible.

Halifax's statement, apart from highlighting the difference in the two perspectives, draws our attention to another dimension of the matter, namely the elite's perceptions of one another. As Robert Spadaro, whose findings were reported in Chapter I, has written

> The perceptions each has of the other would help determine the policy function. Thus, the values, attitudes or perceptions that each holds of the other and toward their interaction can have important implications for their relationships to policy. [7]

If it is asked whether Spadaro's findings are necessarily applicable to the British political system, we must remember that he took care to spread his study over three distinct political sub-cultures. More importantly, a prior study in a far more different political culture (India) found considerable misperception and conflict between the two groups. [8] It is, therefore, more probable than not, that the same patterns would prevail when the British political culture is considered.

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[7] Robert N. Spadaro, "Role Perceptions of Politicians vis-a-vis Public Administrators: Parameters for Public Policy," The Western Political Quarterly, December, 1973, p. 717.

While the bureaucratic elite was considerably reticent on its view of the political elite and one can find only occasional examples of its negative character and while it is also true that the material on the political view of the bureaucratic elite is hardly more plentiful, there is enough evidence to indicate the singular lack of confidence from which the latter suffered. Middlemas writes, "A dozen quotations from Chamberlain's letters and diary could be given to show his disparagement of diplomatic personnel..." [9] He gives one example of many where Chamberlain accuses the bureaucrats of never keeping the "major objects of foreign policy in mind, with the result that they make obstructions for themselves by endeavouring to give smart answers to some provocative foreign statements." [10] Thus, as his biographer noted, Chamberlain would "occasionally turn the corner of a speech or impart his aspirations to the press, so that he outran or even contradicted the Foreign Office sense of what was wise.."[11] Hoare, the Prime Minister's companion on his daily walks, wrote

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[8] S. Kothari and R. Roy, Relations between Politicians and Administrators at the District Level (New Delhi: Administrative Reforms Commission of Government of India, 1969).
[9] Middlemas, op. cit., p. 78.
[10] Chamberlain letters, 6 November, 1937. Quoted by Middlemas, op. cit., p. 79.

> the old established machine of the Foreign Office did not seem to him to move quickly enough for the crisis that threatened Europe.. The classical methods of diplomacy seemed out of date in the new world of dictators, wireless and aeroplanes.[12]

Not suprisingly then, "impatience with Foreign Office became a common characteristic among the politicians."[13] Thus Middlemas concludes, "whether or not the Foreign Office failed, the Chamberlain Cabinet believed it had and acted accordingly."[14] The mutual perceptions of the two elites, essentially negative in character, thus accentuated the hiatus between the two and led to an essential non co-operation and a confusion of purpose as far as the policy function was concerned. The contrary directions in which the two levels moved had its inevitable impact on the actual input into the international system. Knowing what we do of Hitler, it is tempting to conclude that if the political elite of Britain had allowed itself to be influenced by its bureaucratic counterpart, the ignominy of Munich might perhaps have been avoided. At the very least, events could have taken a different course.

Having discussed the two levels of decision-making, we may now properly turn to a consideration of policy orientations. A natural question to ask is how the specific hypothesis mentioned in Chapter I hold up. Can they, for example, explain the four phases in the development of the political elite's thinking on the subject. As we hypothesized in Chapter I, the following environmental factors would appear to operate for the political elite in each Foreign Policy category:

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[11] Feiling, op. cit., p. 328.
[12] Hoare, op. cit., p. 259.
[13] Middlemas, op. cit., p. 75.
[14] Ibid., p. 76.

The first phase was seen to be 'preservative'. The military strength of Britain relative to Germany was definitely perceived by the political elite to be low and the public opinion was largely perceived to be against continental entanglements. Political stability was taken for granted. As for environmental hostility, this was seen to be low since Britain was not confrontd with immediate danger as a result of the Anschluss. Risk-taking propensity of the political elite was low in that the belief that a fresh continental commitment aimed at deterring Germany was offset by the fear that the said commitment would only hasten Britain along the path of war. The first phase, therefore, provided tentative proof for the following hypotheses regarding the political elite set out in Chapter I.

1) with low MS, one expects a low Risk-Taking Propensity and pressure for 'preservative' (and 'acquiescent') policy
2) If PO is pacific, one expects the Risk-Taking Propensity to be low and pressure for a 'preservative' (and 'acquiescent') policy
3) With high PS, one expects a low Risk-Taking Propensity and pressure for a 'preservative' (and 'acquiescent') policy
4) If Environmental Hostility is low, Risk-Taking Propensity will tend to be low and pressure will

exist for a 'preservative' policy.

In the second phase, the variables of Military Strength, Political Stability and Public Opinion remained the same for the political elite. From an objective viewpoint, Environmental Hostility, if anything, should have been lower since nothing alarming happened in the international system during this period. Subjectively, however, environmental hostility increased for the political elite, principally because of the conviction that France would definitely honour her treaty with Czechoslovakia, a point which had been dealt with only ambiguously during the first phase.

The fact that only one variable, i.e. Environmental Hostility, changed significantly explains why the new phase, i.e. the 'promotive' phase, was rather weak in nature. Where all the variable values are present in the hypothesized order, one would imagine the phase to be more or less solidly entrenched. The fact that all the variables do not change in the hypothesized manner does not mean that the existing phase does not alter. We assume that change in any one variable will lead to some change in the phase itself, even though the change may be of a somewhat weak order. In saying this, however, we must remember, as pointed out in Chapter I, that the influence of the various causal factors may differ. Each variable need not have the same causal impact on the phase. A change, for example, in the variable of public opinion may introduce less of a change in the phase than a change in the perception of military strength. In the present case, it appears that the perception of environmental hostility played a critical role in the approaches followed at various points in time by the political elite.

An important condition for this might have been the uncertainty in the international system with which the political elite was confronted. It did indeed try to convince itself that Hitler's aims were limited and that violence would not be resorted to in achieving these aims. But there was a large element of wishfulness in this line of thinking. The political elite had to come to terms with two elements: (1) the rumours, epecially in the latter part of the period under study, of Hitler's planned attack against Czechoslovakia and (2) with the ostensible French determination, particularly in the Phase II, to defend Czechoslovkia against Germany.

Point (1) was a little easier to deal with in the earlier phases, largely because in its structuring of reality, the political elite preferred not to think that Hitler was planning for war. Even here, the unpredictability of Hitler was an unsettling factor and the desire not to provoke him was one of the determinant factors in the elite's "do nothirg" approach. It was only in Phase IV, when Chamberlain became convinced, after his Berchtesgaden meeting with Hitler, of the dictator's unrelenting will to war, that environmental hostility rose to crisis proportions, leading to acquiescence on the part of the British political elite.

Point (2), however, confronted the political elite with a different sort of threat - and underlined how brittle its understanding of and control over the environmental forces really were. If Hitler did indeed opt for force - the political elite could not rule this out definitively - then French action to stop him would inevitably involve Britain. The unquestioned assumption here was that British security could not afford to see France overrun. The threat, therefore, was of a somewhat complex kind and depended for its existence on the French will to defend Czechoslovakia, a point upon which the political elite was never able to pronounce with complete confidence. It was a threat that emanated not from an enemy, but from a near-ally. It placed in the latter's hands, and not with Britain, the power to decide between peace and war, to increase or decrease international tension. It was the desire to modify this situation that led the political elite of Britain to undertake a 'promotive' approach in Phase II.

The return tc the 'preservative' phase can to a great extent be explained by the reduction in the subjective appraisal of environmental hostility. The French admission that its connection with Czechoslovakia need not be regarded as sacrosanct made the political elite realize that the future need not necessarily hold danger for Britain. At the same time, however, the attribution of lower hostility to the environment can only partially explain the switch from the 'promotive' to the 'preservative' stage. A complete explanation must also refer to the variables of Military Strength and Public Opinion which the political elite temporarily had overlooked in its short-lived game of 'bluff', but which reasserted themselves as important ingredients of the reality facing Britain.

The slide into the 'acquiescent' phase is more easily explainable. The variables of Military Strength, Political Stabilty and Public Opinion remained the same, but Environmental Hostility increased both subjectively and objectively. Hitler's demands and threats which earlier had only been half-hinted at were now communicated unabashedly. With France unable tc find a graceful way of retreating from its Central European obligaticns, the danger that faced Britain was real, much too real for the political elite's comfort. No longer could it creep into and stay in its 'preservative' shell. Action was demanded if war was to be averted. The acticn that resulted totalled up to a general acquiescence in Hitler's demands. The risk-taking propensity of the political elite was too low to enable it to expose Hitler's bluff, if bluff indeed it was. The three hypothesis mentioned in connection with the first phase found further proof in the last phase.

One interesting fact that emerges from this analysis is that high Environmental Hostility need not necessarily result in a high Risk-Taking Propensity. The environment merely provides the stimuli - the direction in which the Risk-Taking Propensity moves is determined by other factors, amongst which we include Military Strength and Public Opinion. Environmental ambiguity is a factor with which all governments have to contend . Carving some certainty from the uncertainty surrounding themselves is a necessary prelude to a government's adopting any policy stance. In the case of the British political elite, during most of the period under question, it was barraged by conflicting reports of what Hitler actually intended. The subjective increase in the Environmental Hostility in the second phase was thus based on two assumptions, one of which was shaky, that Hitler might march against Czechoslovakia - and the other, which was not - that France would march to Czechoslovakia's aid. The former assumption made it possible for the elite to persuade itself that Hitler could possibly be deterred by a superficial show of firmness. In this case, a subjectively induced high Environmental Hostility led to a temporary increase in Risk-Taking Propensity. In September, however, Hitler made clear to the British his intention of marching into Czechoslovakia, if his demands were not acceded to. The reality that Britain was "on a bad wicket" now led to a decrease in the Risk-taking Propensity.

By confining itself to a single case, the study indeed cannot test the full validity of the given framework. This only serves to underline its essentially explorative character.[15] There was, for example, no 'intransigent' phase to investigate and the 'promotive' phase, as far as the political elite was concerned, was admittedly a little murky in its initial half. While that may be the case, the 'preservative' and 'acquiescent' phases did reinforce one's confidence in the validity of the framework. Further research, focusing especially on the 'intransigent' and the 'promotive' phases, taking a different crisis and different political elite into consideration would test the basis of this confidence.

As for the hypotheses concerning the bureaucratic elite, they have been highlighted in an even more satisfactory fashion. Chapter II gave us an indication of the role that Britain sought to play in the inter-War period. In the three phases we distinguished in that period, Britain's role was consistently that of trying to bring conflicting parties together. It was this 'promotive' tradition that the bureaucratic elite sought to extend in its deliberations over the Sudeten Issue. Whether the bureaucratic elite is always more sensitive to a nation's foreign policy tradition than the political elite can only be stated after further investigations.

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[15] The explorative nature of this study is stressed since what is presented here are not theories, but postulated models of elite policy-making behaviour, where variables from various levels are combined in a plausible and logical fashion. The main concern is to present the parameters of political and bureaucratic policy-making. There is, therefore, less rigour and a greater looseness than would be permissible in a theory on the same subject. The distinction between models and theories I am applying here is the one to which Michael Sullivan has drawn our attention. Sullivan, International Relations : Theories and Evidence, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

The first hypothesis, i.e., that respect for international structure will impel the bureaucratic elite on a 'promotive' course and towards a greater control of the international system finds impressive confirmation in the present study. As Chapter IV indicates, the 'promotive' idea was always strong with the British Foreign Office. When, from August, 1938 onwards, signals from their interntional environment led it gradually to the belief that Hitler was planning still another coup, it sought in vain to stop him through the delivery of an explicit, unambiguous warning which Britain's political elite felt compelled to reject.

As for the second hypothesis, i.e., the more an issue is perceived to have the potential to upset the system, the more the bureaucratic elite will opt for a 'promotive' role, we have in Table 8 pointed out how salient the Foreign Office felt the Sudeten Issue to be in March, 1938. In Chapter IV, in the section on Czechoslovakia, this salience is seen to grow as the period progresses, forcing a continuing promotive stance on the bureaucracy's part. The Sudeten Issue had for it an importance that it was unfortunately unable to transmit to the political elite which fluctuated in its approach to the problem. It was not so much failure on the part of the bureaucratic elite - it was simply that the gap between the two elite perspectives was much too wide.

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St. George's High School, Agra	1956	SENIOR CAMBRIDGE
St. Johns College, Agra	1961	B.A.
Punjab University, Chandigarh	1963	M.A.
National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie	1964	
Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi	1965	
Charles University, Prague	1970-71	

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1964	Entered Indian Foreign Service,
1965-1968	3rd Secretary, Embassy of India, Bonn.
1968-1970	2nd Secretary, Embassy of India, Prague.
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1970	Resigned from service.